MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE

OF THE LATE

George Frederic Handel.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Anno ætat:56.

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LIFE

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GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL.

To which is added,

A CATALOGUE of his WORKS,

AND

OBSERVATIONS upon them.

Εγὼ δ' ὅιδα μὲν, ὡς αἱ ὑπερβολαὶ μεγέθες Φύσει ἥκις-α καθαρχί. Τὸ γὰρ ἐν παντὶ ἀκριβὲς, κίνδυν☞ ζμικρότητ☞. LONGINUS.

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Untwisting all the Chains that tie
The hidden Soul of Harmony.

MILTON.

LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-Mall.*

M. DCC. LX.

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George Frederic Handel.

GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL was born at HALL, a city in the circle of Upper-Saxony, the 24th February 1684, by a ſecond wife of his father, who was an eminent ſurgeon and phyſician of the ſame place, and above ſixty when his ſon

was born. He had alſo one daughter by the ſame wife. HANDEL always retained the ſtrongeſt affection for this ſiſter, to whoſe only daughter, *i. e.* his niece now living, he bequeathed the greateſt part of his ample fortune.

While he was yet under ſeven years of age, he went with his father to the Duke of Saxe-Weiſenfels. His ſtrong deſire to pay a viſit to his half-brother, a good deal older than himſelf, (for we have before obſerved that he was the iſſue of a ſecond marriage) and at that time valet de chambre to the Prince, was the occaſion of his going. His father intended to have left him behind, and had actually ſet out without him. He thought one of his age a very improper companion when he was going to the

the court of a Prince, and to attend the duties of his profeſſion. The boy finding all his ſolicitations ineffectual, had recourſe to the only method which was left for the accompliſhment of his wiſh. Having watched the time of his father's ſetting out, and concealed his intention from the reſt of the family, he followed the chaiſe on foot. It was probably retarded by the roughneſs of the roads, or ſome other accident, for he overtook it before it had advanced to any conſiderable diſtance from the town. His father, greatly ſurpriſed at his courage, and ſomewhat diſpleaſed with his obſtinacy, could hardly reſolve what courſe to take. When he was aſked, how he could think of the journey, after ſuch a plain refuſal had been given him; inſtead of anſwering the queſtion, he re-

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newed his intreaties in the moſt preſſing manner, and pleaded in language too moving to be reſiſted. Being taken into the chaiſe, and carried to court, he diſcovered an unſpeakable ſatisfaction at meeting with his brother above-mentioned, whom till then he had never ſeen.

This was not the firſt inſtance of the father's ill ſucceſs, when he judged it expedient to oppoſe or over-rule his ſon's inclinations. This matter demands a more particular explication, before an account can properly be given of what afterwards paſſed at the court of Weiſenfels.

From his very childhood HANDEL had diſcovered ſuch a ſtrong propenſity to Muſic, that his father, who always intended him for the

ſtudy

ſtudy of the Civil Law, had reaſon to be alarmed. Perceiving that this inclination ſtill increaſed, he took every method to oppoſe it. He ſtrictly forbad him to meddle with any muſical inſtrument; nothing of that kind was ſuffered to remain in the houſe, nor was he ever permitted to go to any other, where ſuch kind of furniture was in uſe. All this caution and art, inſtead of reſtraining, did but augment his paſſion. He had found means to get a little clavichord privately convey'd to a room at the top of the houſe. To this room he conſtantly ſtole when the family was aſleep. He had made ſome progreſs before Muſic had been prohibited, and by his aſſiduous practice at the hours of reſt, had made ſuch farther advances, as, tho' not attended to at

that time, were no ſlight prognoſtics of his future greatneſs.

And here it may not be unpleaſing to the reader, juſt to remind him of the minute and ſurpriſing reſemblance between theſe paſſages in the early periods of HANDEL's life, and ſome which are recorded in that of the celebrated monſieur Paſcal †, written by his ſiſter. Nothing could equal the bias of the one to Mathematics, but the bias of the other to Muſic: both in their very childhood out-did the efforts of maturer age: they purſued their reſpective ſtudies not only without any aſſiſtance, but againſt the conſent of their parents, and in ſpite of all the oppoſition they contrived to give them.

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† Tycho Brahe is another inſtance of the like kind.

We left our little traveller juſt on his arrival with his father at the Duke of Saxe-Weiſenfels. In ſuch a ſituation it was not eaſy to keep him from getting at harpſichords, and his father was too much engaged to watch him ſo cloſely there as he had done at home. He often mentioned to his friends, this uncontroulable humour of his ſon, which he told them he had taken great pains to ſubdue, but hitherto with little or no ſucceſs. He ſaid it was eaſy to foreſee, that if it was not ſubdued very ſoon, it would preclude all improvements in the ſcience for which he intended him, and wholly diſconcert the plan that had been formed and agreed on for his education.

The reaſonableneſs of ſuch apprehenſions every one admitted, in

caſe it was determined to adhere to the ſcheme above-mentioned. But the prudence of adhering to it was doubted by many. It was obſerved with reaſon, that where Nature ſeemed to declare herſelf in ſo ſtrong a manner, reſiſtance was often not only fruitleſs, but pernicious. Some ſaid, that, from all the accounts, the caſe appeared ſo deſperate, that nothing but the cutting off his fingers could prevent his playing; and others affirmed, that it was a pity any thing *ſhould* prevent it. Such were the ſentiments and declarations of the Doctor's friends in regard to his ſon. It is not likely they would have had any great effect, but for the following incident, which gave their advice all the weight and authority it ſeems to have deſerved.

It happened one morning, that while he was playing on the organ after the ſervice was over, the Duke was in the church. Something there was in the manner of playing, which drew his attention ſo ſtrongly, that his Highneſs, as ſoon as he returned, aſked his valet de chambre who it was that he had heard at the organ, when the ſervice was over. The valet replied, that it was his brother. The Duke demanded to ſee him.

After he had ſeen him, and made all the inquiries which it was natural for a man of taſte and diſcernment to make on ſuch an occaſion, he told his phyſician, that every father muſt judge for himſelf in what manner to diſpoſe of his children; but that, for his own part, he could not but conſider it as

as a ſort of crime againſt the public and poſterity, to rob the world of ſuch a riſing Genius!

The old Doctor ſtill retained his prepoſſeſſions in favour of the Civil Law. Though he was convinced it was almoſt become an act of neceſſity to yield to his ſon's inclinations (as it ſeemed an act of duty to yield to the Prince's advice and authority) yet it was not without the utmoſt reluctance that he brought himſelf to this reſolution. He was ſenſible of the Prince's goodneſs in taking ſuch notice of his ſon, and giving his opinion concerning the beſt method of education. But he begged leave humbly to repreſent to his Highneſs, that though Muſic was an elegant art, and a fine amuſement, yet if conſidered as an occupation, it had little dignity, as

as having for its object nothing better than mere pleaſure and entertainment: that whatever degree of eminence his ſon might arrive at in ſuch a profeſſion, he thought that a much leſs degree in many others would be far preferable.

The Prince could not agree with him in his notions of Muſic as a profeſſion, which he ſaid were much too low and diſparaging, as great excellence in any kind entitled men to great honour. And as to profit, he obſerved how much more likely he would be to ſucceed, if ſuffered to purſue the path that Nature and Providence ſeemed to have marked out for him; than if he was forced into another track to which he had no ſuch bias; nay, to which he had a direct averſion. He concluded with ſaying, that he was far from

from recommending the ſtudy of Muſic in excluſion of the Languages, or of the Civil Law, provided it was poſſible to reconcile them together: what he wiſhed was, that all of them might have fair play; that no violence might be uſed, but the boy be left at liberty to follow the natural bent of his faculties, whatever that might be.

All this while he had kept his eyes ſtedfaſtly fixed on his powerful advocate; and his ears were as watchful and attentive to the impreſſions which the Prince's diſcourſe made upon his father.

The iſſue of their debate was this: not only a toleration was obtained for Muſic, but conſent for a maſter to be employed, who ſhould forward and aſſiſt him in his

his advances on his return to Hall. At his departure from Weiſenfels, the Prince fill'd his pockets with money, and told him, with a ſmile, that if he minded his ſtudies, no encouragements ſhould be wanting.

The great civilities which he had received at the court of Weiſenfels, the proſperous iſſue of the debate juſt mentioned, but eſpecially the friendly and generous diſmiſſion which the Prince had given him, were often the ſubject of his thoughts. Theſe fortunate incidents ſerved to foment that native emulation, and to inflame that inbred ambition, which, even at this early period it was eaſy to diſcover in him.

The firſt thing which his father did at his return to Hall, was to place him under one ZACKAW, who was

was organiſt to the cathedral church. This perſon had great abilities in his profeſſion, and was not more qualified than inclined to do juſtice to any pupil of a hopeful diſpoſition. HANDEL pleaſed him ſo much, that he never thought he could do enough for him. The firſt object of his attention was to ground him thoroughly in the principles of harmony. His next care was to cultivate his imagination, and form his taſte. He had a large collection of Italian as well as German muſic: he ſhewed him the different ſtyles of different nations; the excellences and defects of each particular author; and, that he might equally advance in the practical part, he frequently gave him ſubjects to work, and made him copy, and play, and compoſe in his ſtead. Thus he had more exerciſe, and

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more experience than uſually falls to the ſhare of any learner at his years.

ZACKAW was proud of a pupil, who already began to attract the attention of all perſons who lived near Hall, or reſorted thither from diſtant quarters. And he was glad of an aſſiſtant, who, by his uncommon talents, was capable of ſupplying his place, whenever he had an inclination to be abſent, as he often was, from his love of company, and a chearful glaſs. It may ſeem ſtrange to talk of an aſſiſtant at ſeven years of age, for he could not be more, if indeed he was quite ſo much, when firſt he was committed to the care of this perſon. But it will appear much ſtranger, that by the time

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he was nine he began to compoſe the church ſervice for voices and inſtruments, and from that time actually did compoſe a ſervice every week for three years ſucceſſively. However, it muſt not be forgot, that he had made ſome progreſs at home, before his father began to be alarmed, and, in conſequence thereof, had forbid him to touch any muſical inſtrument: that, after this ſevere prohibition, he had made further advances at ſtolen intervals by his practice on the clavichord; and after that had made the moſt of his moderate ſtay at the court of Weiſenfels, where he found many inſtruments, and more admirers.

We have already hinted at ſome ſtriking coincidencies of life and character, which are found in him, and

and the famous Paſcal. In this place we may juſt obſerve, that the latter, at the age of twelve compos'd a treatiſe on the propagation of ſounds, and at ſixteen another upon conic ſections.

From the few facts juſt related it is eaſy to gueſs, that from the time of HANDEL's having a maſter in form, the Civil Law could have had no great ſhare of his attention. The bent of his mind to Muſic was now ſo evident, and ſo prevailing, that the Prince's advice was punctually followed. No further endeavours were uſed to alter or correct it. The conſequence of this full liberty was ſoon perceived, the pupil ſurpaſſed the maſter, the maſter himſelf confeſſed his ſuperiority. HALL was not a place for ſo aſpiring a youth

to be long confined to. During this interval of three or four years, he had made all the improvements that were any way conſiſtent with the opportunities it afforded; but he was impatient for another ſituation, which would afford him better, and ſuch a one at length preſented itſelf. After ſome conſultations, BERLIN was the place agreed on. He had a friend and relation at that court, on whoſe care and kindneſs his parents could rely. It was in the year 1698 that he went to Berlin. The Opera there was in a flouriſhing condition, under the direction of the King of Pruſſia, (grandfather of the preſent) who, by the encouragement which he gave to ſingers and compoſers, drew thither ſome of the moſt eminent from Italy, and other parts. Among theſe were BUONONCINI and

ATTILIO, the ſame who afterwards came to England while HANDEL was here, and of whom the former was at the head of a formidable oppoſition againſt him. This perſon was in high requeſt for his compoſitions, probably the beſt which that court had known. But from his natural temper, he was eaſily elated with ſucceſs, and apt to be intoxicated with admiration and applauſe. Though HANDEL was talk'd of as a moſt extraordinary player on the harpſichord for one ſo young, yet on account of his years he had always conſidered him as a mere child. But as people ſtill perſiſted in their encomiums, it was his fancy to try the truth of them. For this end he compoſed a Cantata in the chromatic ſtyle, difficult in every reſpect, and ſuch as even a maſter,

he thought, would be puzzled to play, or accompany without ſome previous practice. When he found that he, whom he had regarded as a mere child, treated this formidable compoſition as a mere trifle, not only executing it at ſight, but with a degree of accuracy, truth, and expreſſion hardly to be expected even from repeated practice; — then indeed he began to ſee him in another light, and to talk of him in another tone.

ATTILIO, ſomewhat his inferior as a compoſer, was a better performer on the harpſichord, and, from the ſweetneſs of his temper, and modeſty of his character, was much more beloved as a man. His fondneſs for HANDEL commenced at his firſt coming to Berlin, and continued to the time of his leaving it.

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He would often take him on his knee, and make him play on his harpſichord for an hour together, equally pleaſed and ſurprized with the extraordinary proficiency of ſo young a perſon; for at this time he could not exceed thirteen, as may eaſily be ſeen by comparing dates. The kindneſs of ATTILIO was not thrown away; as he was always welcome, he never loſt any opportunity of being with him, or of learning from him all that a perſon of his age and experience was capable of ſhewing him. It would be injuſtice to BUONONCINI not to mention his civilities to HANDEL, but they were accompanied with that kind of diſtance and reſerve, which always leſſen the value of an obligation, by the very endeavour to enhance it. The age of the perſon to be obliged

ſeems to remove all ſuſpicion of rivalſhip or jealouſy. One ſo young could hardly be the object of either; and yet from what afterwards happened, ſuch a notion may appear to ſome perſons not altogether deſtitute of probability. Thoſe who are fond of explaining former paſſages by ſubſequent events, would be apt to ſay, that the ſeeds of enmity were ſown at Berlin; and that though they did not appear 'till the ſcene was changed, they waited only for time and occaſion to produce them.

Thus much is certain, that the little ſtranger had not been long at court before his abilities became known to the King, who frequently ſent for him, and made him large preſents. Indeed his Majeſty, convinc'd of his ſingular endow-

endowments, and unwilling to loſe the opportunity of patronizing ſo rare a genius, had conceived a deſign of cultivating it at his own expence. His intention was to ſend him to Italy, where he might be formed under the beſt maſters, and have opportunities of hearing and ſeeing all that was excellent in the kind. As ſoon as it was intimated to HANDEL's friends (for he was yet too young to determine for himſelf) they deliberated what anſwer it would be proper to return, in caſe this ſcheme ſhould be propoſed in form. It was the opinion of many that his fortune was already made, and that his relations would certainly embrace ſuch an offer with the utmoſt alacrity. Others, who better underſtood the temper and ſpirit of the court at Berlin, thought

this a matter of nice ſpeculation, and cautious debate. For they well knew, that if he once engag'd in the King's ſervice, he muſt remain in it, whether he liked it, or not; that if he continued to pleaſe, it would be a reaſon for not parting with him; and that if he happened to diſpleaſe, his ruin would be the certain conſequence. To accept an offer of this nature, was the ſame thing as to enter into a formal engagement, but how to refuſe it was ſtill the difficulty. At length it was reſolved that ſome excuſe muſt be found. It was not long before the King cauſed his intentions to be ſignified, and the anſwer was, that the Doctor would always retain the profoundeſt ſenſe of the honour done to him by the notice which his Majeſty had been graciouſly pleaſed to take of his

ſon;

ſon; but as he himſelf was now grown old, and could not expect to have him long with him, he humbly hoped the King would forgive his deſire to decline the offer which had been made him by order of his Majeſty.

I am not able to inform the reader how this anſwer was reliſhed by the King, whom we may ſuppoſe not much accuſtomed to refuſals, eſpecially of this ſort. Such an incident made it improper for HANDEL to ſtay much longer at the court of Berlin, where the more his abilities ſhould be known and commended, the more ſome perſons would be apt to ſift and ſcrutinize the motives of his father's conduct.

Many

Many and great were the compliments and civilities which he received on his leaving Berlin. As yet he had been but twice from home, and both times had received ſuch marks of honour and diſtinction, as are ſeldom, if ever, paid to one of his age and condition. On his return to Hall, he began to feel himſelf more, to be conſcious of his own ſuperiority, to diſcover that ſpirit of emulation, and paſſion for fame, which urged him ſtrongly to go out into the world, and try what ſucceſs he ſhould have in it. His acquaintance with the eminent maſters at Berlin had opened his mind to new ideas of excellence, and ſhewn him in a more extended view the perfections of his art. After his friends had refuſed ſuch offers as the King had made him, he never could

could endure the thought of ſtaying long at home, either as a pupil or ſubſtitute to his old maſter ZACKAW. He had heard ſo high a character of the ſingers and compoſers of Italy, that his thoughts ran much on a journey into that country. But this project required a longer purſe than he was as yet provided with, and was therefore ſuſpended till ſuch time as it could be compaſſed without hazard or inconvenience. In the mean while, as his fortune was to depend on his ſkill in his profeſſion, it was neceſſary to conſider of ſome place leſs diſtant, where he might employ his time to advantage, and be ſtill improving in knowledge and experience. Next to the Opera of Berlin, that of HAMBURGH was in the higheſt requeſt. It was reſolved

ſolved to ſend him thither on his own bottom, and chiefly with a view to improvement. It was a wiſe reſolution not to engage him too early with a view to profit. How many parents have murdered the fine talents of their children by weakly ſacrificing that liberty and independency, which are eſſential to their exertion! This conſideration had ever been attended to by his friends while he was under their direction. And it is very remarkable that HANDEL, when he came to act for himſelf, conſtantly purſued the ſame ſalutary maxim. In the ſequel of his life he refuſed the higheſt offers from perſons of the greateſt diſtinction; nay, the higheſt favours from the faireſt of the ſex, only becauſe he would not be cramped

or confined by particular attachments.

His father's death happened not long after his return from Berlin. This event produced a conſiderable change for the worſe in the income of his mother. That he might not add to her expences, the firſt thing which he did on his arrival at Hamburgh, was to procure ſcholars, and obtain ſome employment in the orcheſtra. Such was his induſtry and ſucceſs in ſetting out, that the firſt remittance which his mother ſent him he generouſly returned her, accompanied with a ſmall preſent of his own. On this occaſion it is but juſtice to obſerve, that the ſame generous regard for thoſe with whom he had any natural or accidental

dental connection, appeared in the later, as well as in the earlier periods of his life. But a very few years before his death, being informed that the widow of ZACKAW was left ill provided for, he ſent her money more than once. He would have done the ſame by her ſon, for whoſe welfare he appeared to be equally anxious; but the aſſurances he received, that all ſuch ſervices would only furniſh him with opportunities of increaſing thoſe ſottiſh habits he had contracted, with-held his hand.

Before we advance any farther in his hiſtory, it is neceſſary ſome accounts ſhould be given of the Opera at Hamburgh, as well as ſome character of the compoſer and ſingers.

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The principal ſingers were CONCRATINI and MATHYSON. The latter was ſecretary to Sir Cyril Wych, who was reſident for the Engliſh court, had HANDEL for his muſic-maſter, and was himſelf a fine player on the harpſichord. MATHYSON was no great ſinger, for which reaſon he ſung only occaſionally; but he was a good actor, a good compoſer of leſſons, and a good player on the harpſichord. He wrote and tranſlated ſeveral treatiſes. One that he wrote was on Compoſition. He had thoughts of writing the life of HANDEL many years before his death. Had he purſued this deſign, he would have had advantages beyond what we can pretend to, *i. e.* ampler and freſher materials; at leaſt, for ſo much of the life as had then elapſed. All that

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is here intended, is to give a plain, artleſs account of ſuch particulars as we have been able to learn, and ſuch only as we have reaſon to believe authentic. To return to our narration.

CONRATINI excelled greatly both as an actreſs and a ſinger. KEYSAR did the ſame as a compoſer, but being a man of gaiety and expence, involved himſelf in debts, which forced him to abſcond. His Operas, for ſome time, continued to be performed during his abſence. On his diſappearing, the perſon who before had played the ſecond harpſichord, demanded the firſt. This occaſioned a diſpute between him and HANDEL, the particulars of which, partly for the ſake of their ſingularity, and partly on account

count of their importance, may deſerve to be mentioned.

On what reaſons HANDEL grounded his claim to the firſt harpſichord I do not underſtand: he had played a violin in the orcheſtra, he had a good command on this inſtrument, and was known to have a better on the other. But the older candidate was not unfit for the office, and inſiſted on the right of ſucceſſion. HANDEL ſeemed to to have no plea but that of natural ſuperiority, of which he was conſcious, and from which he would not recede. This diſpute occaſioned parties in the Opera-houſe. On the one ſide it was ſaid, with great appearance of reaſon, that to ſet ſuch a boy as HANDEL over a perſon ſo much his ſenior, was both unjuſt and unprecedented.

On the other, it was urged with ſome plauſibility, that the Opera was not to be ruined for punctilios; that it was eaſy to foreſee, from the difficulties KEYSAR was under, that a Compoſer would ſoon be wanted, but not ſo eaſy to find a perſon capable of ſucceeding him, unleſs it were HANDEL. In ſhort, matters (they ſaid) were now at that paſs, that the queſtion, if fairly ſtated, was not who ſhould conduct the Opera, but whether there ſhould be any Opera at all.

Theſe arguments prevailed; and he, to whom the firſt place ſeemed of courſe to be due, was conſtrained to yield it to his ſtripling-competitor. But how much he felt the indignity, may be gueſſed from the nature and degree of his reſentment; more ſuited to the glowing

temper

temper of an Italian, than to the phlegmatic conſtitution of a German: For, determined to make HANDEL pay dear for his priority, he ſtifled his rage for the preſent, only to wait an opportunity of giving it full vent. As they were coming out of the orcheſtra, he made a puſh at him with a ſword, which being aimed full at his heart, would for ever have removed him from the office he had uſurped, but for the friendly *Score*, which he accidentally carried in his boſom; and through which to have forced it, would have demanded all the might of Ajax himſelf.

Had this happened in the early ages, not a mortal but would have been perſuaded that APOLLO himſelf

had interpoſed to preſerve him, in the form of a muſic-book.

From the circumſtances which are related of this affair, it has more the appearance of an aſſaſſination, than of a rencounter: if the latter, one of HANDEL's years might well be wanting in the courage, or the ſkill to defend himſelf: if the former, ſuppoſing him capable of making a defence, he could not be prepared for it.

How many great men, in the very dawning of their glory, have been planted, like him, on the very verge of deſtruction! as if Fortune, jealous of Nature, made a ſhew of ſacrificing her nobleſt productions, only to remind her of that ſupremacy to which ſhe aſpires!

Whatever

Whatever might be the merits of the quarrel at firſt, HANDEL ſeemed now to have purchaſed his title to precedence by the dangers he had incurred to ſupport it. What he and his friends expected, ſoon happened. From conducting the performance, he became Compoſer to the Opera. KEYSAR, from his unhappy ſituation, could no longer ſupply the Manager, who therefore applied to HANDEL, and furniſhed him with a drama to ſet. The name of it was ALMERIA, and this was the firſt Opera which he made. The ſucceſs of it was ſo great, that it ran for thirty nights without interruption. He was at this time not much above fourteen: before he was quite fifteen, he made a ſecond, entitled FLORINDA; and ſoon after, a third called NERONE, which were heard with the ſame applauſe. It

never was his intention to ſettle at Hamburgh: he told the Manager, on his firſt application to him, that he came thither only as a traveller, and with a view to improvement: that till the Compoſer ſhould be at liberty, or till ſome other ſucceſſor or ſubſtitute could be found, he was willing to be employed, but was reſolved to ſee more of the world before he entered into any engagements, which would confine him long to any particular place. The Manager left that matter for him and his friends to determine; but ſo long as he thought proper to be concerned in the Opera, he promiſed him advantages at leaſt as great as any Compoſer that had gone before him. This indeed was no more than what intereſt would readily ſuggeſt to a perſon in his ſituation: for good houſes will always afford

good

good pay, to all who bear a part in the performance; and eſpecially to that perſon, whoſe character and abilities can enſure its ſucceſs.

At the time that ALMERIA and FLORINDA were performed, there were many perſons of note at Hamburgh, among whom was the Prince of Tuſcany, brother to John Gaſton de Medicis, Grand Duke. The Prince was a great lover of the art for which his country is ſo renowned. HANDEL's proficiency in it, not only procured him acceſs to his Highneſs, but occaſioned a ſort of intimacy betwixt them: they frequently diſcourſed together on the ſtate of Muſic in general, and on the merits of Compoſers, Singers, and Performers in particular. The Prince would often lament that HANDEL was not acquainted with thoſe of Italy;

ſhewed him a large collection of Italian Muſic; and was very deſirous he ſhould return with him to Florence. HANDEL plainly confeſſed that he could ſee nothing in the Muſic which anſwered the high character his Highneſs had given it. On the contrary, he thought it ſo very indifferent, that the Singers, he ſaid, muſt be angels to recommend it. The Prince ſmiled at the ſeverity of his cenſure, and added, that there needed nothing but a journey to Italy to reconcile him to the ſtyle and taſte which prevailed there. He aſſured him that there was no country in which a young proficient could ſpend his time to ſo much advantage; or in which every branch of his profeſſion was cultivated with ſo much care. HANDEL replied, that if this were ſo, he was much at a loſs to conceive

how

how ſuch great culture ſhould be followed by ſo little fruit. However, what his Highneſs had told him, and what he had before heard of the fame of the Italians, would certainly induce him to undertake the journey he had been pleaſed to recommend, the moment it ſhould be convenient. The Prince then intimated, that if he choſe to return with him, no conveniences ſhould be wanting. HANDEL, without intending to accept of the favour deſigned him, expreſſed his ſenſe of the honour done him. For he reſolved to go to Italy on his own bottom, as ſoon as he could make a purſe for that occaſion. This noble ſpirit of independency, which poſſeſſed him almoſt from his childhood, was never known to forſake him, not even in the moſt diſtreſsful ſeaſons of his life.

During

During his continuance at Hamburgh, he made a conſiderable number of Sonatas. But what became of theſe pieces he never could learn, having been ſo imprudent as to let them go out of his hands.

Four or five years had elapſed from the time of his coming to Hamburgh, to that of his leaving it. It has already been obſerved, that inſtead of being chargeable to his mother, he began to be ſerviceable to her before he was well ſettled in his new ſituation. Tho' he had continued to ſend her remittances from time to time, yet, clear of his own expences, he had made up a purſe of 200 ducats. On the ſtrength of this fund he reſolved to ſet out for Italy.

The

The number of ſchools and academies for Muſic ſubſiſting in the different quarters of this country, and the vaſt encouragements afforded to thoſe who excel in the Art, have long conſpired, with all the advantages of conſtitution and climate, to render it the moſt eminent part of the worldfor its Compoſers, Singers, and Performers. As each of theſe ſeparate claſſes hath a ſtyle and manner peculiar to itſelf, ſo there are ſome things well worth obſerving, which are common to them all. And a foreigner, who would make a figure in the profeſſion, ought to obſerve them with the greater exactneſs, becauſe they are ſuch as cannot be marked, or written, or even deſcribed. So little are they to be learnt by rule, that they are not unfrequently direct viola-

violations * of rule. I am at a loſs what to call them, unleſs they are certain beauties and delicacies in *ſentiment* and *expreſſion*, which are only to be catched from long habit, and attentive obſervation. Tho' they ſeem, at firſt ſight, to be next to nothing, yet how much depends upon

* The very firſt anſwer of the Fugue in the overture for MUCIUS SCÆVOLA, affords an inſtance of this kind. GEMINIANI, the ſtricteſt obſerver of rule, was ſo charmed with this direct tranſgreſſion of it, that, on hearing its effect, he cried out, Quel ſemitono (meaning the f. ſharp) vale un mondo!

The younger SCARLATTI often makes a happy uſe of theſe licences, though ſome think he uſes them too often. It is certain that they ought not to be uſed without great caution and judgment. They would not be tolerated but for thoſe great and ſtriking effects which they are found to produce, when under the management of a great Maſter.

It is needleſs to obſerve the exact analogy which Poetry and Painting bear to Muſic in reſpect to theſe licences, to which the ſlender company of great Genius's ſeem to claim an excluſive privilege.

upon them, we may judge from the terms in which the Italians uſually deſcribe them, viz. *è quel tantino, chi fa tutto.*

Indeed, from the beſt information which we can get of the ſtate of the Art in its different ſtages and periods, it ſhould ſeem as if no people ever attained to ſuch excellency in Vocal Muſic, or poſſeſſed ſo extenſive a command over the paſſions and affections as the Italians.†

The

† Here I am ſenſible that I have the ABBE DU BOS directly againſt me. So ſtrong are his prejudices in favour of the Muſic of his own nation, that he makes no ſcruple of ſetting LULLI above all the Italian Maſters. VOSSIUS having declared his reaſons for preferring the ancient to the modern Muſicians; and the ABBE not conceivng any of either claſs fit to be compared with his countryman, deſires his readers to conſider the queſtion in the following view:

" Qu'on ſe figure donc quelle comparaiſon VOSSIUS auroit faite des CANTATES, & des SO-

NATES

The paſſionate admirers of HANDEL's ſtyle, are apt to confound this characteriſtic excellence of *theirs* with

NATES des Italiens, avec les Symphonies & les Recits de LULLI, s'il les eût connus, lorſqu'il écrivit le livre dont je parle."

And might we not aſk the ABBE DU BOS what he conceives that the ſame learned Critic would have thought on this ſubject, had he lived to ſee the very elegant and ſenſible *Lettre ſur la Muſique Françoiſe* [par J. J. Rouſſeau, Citoyen de Genéve] in which it is proved, almoſt to a demonſtration, as well from the intractable genius of the language, as from the perverted taſte of the nation, that the French are never likely to have any Muſic which an impartial and competent judge of the Art would endure. This is ſo true, that what is tolerable in LULLI himſelf, is borrowed from thoſe very Italians ſo lightly valued. The advantages which he drew from his acquaintance with CORELLI, will not be forgot, any more than the return which he made him by raiſing a faction againſt him, and driving him from Paris. Theſe are no good arguments of the greatneſs of his mind, notwithſtanding he was thought worthy of being exalted to the rank of a Stateſman and Privy-counſellor.

After

with that effeminacy of taſte, which proceeds from the vain attempt to command thoſe ſtrong feelings of the ſoul without genius, art, or judgment. They do not conſider the advantages he derived from his thorough acquaintance with the Italian

After all that is here inſinuated to his diſadvantage as a Muſician, I am far from thinking that he was deſtitute of talents, and leſs reaſon is there for believing this of his great ſucceſſor Monſieur RAMEAU. It is the more to be lamented that fortune ſhould have thrown them where the beſt parts which nature could beſtow would be ſure of receiving a wrong biaſs; as well from the untoward caſt of the language (equally unfit both for Muſic and Poetry) as from the corruption of the national taſte, to whatever ulterior cauſes this latter may be aſcribed.

'Tis true, Mr. ADDISON, at the end of his laſt paper upon Operas, has not only vindicated, but commended the taſte of the French for Muſic. But in vain does the ingenious ABBE endeavour to avail himſelf of his authority. For though all men will agree with him that the Muſic of every country ſhould

Italian Maſters, to whoſe delicate and beautiful melody he added indeed ſtill higher touches of expreſſion, at the ſame time that he united it with the full ſtrong harmony of his own country. †

We

be adapted, as fas as may be, to the pronunciation and accent of its inhabitants; yet doth it by no means follow, that the pronunciation and accent of every people is equally ſuited to the purpoſes of Muſic; the unalterable principles of which, nay, thoſe of Architecture and Painting alſo, he reſolves at once into the inconſtant, arbitrary deciſions of cuſtom and caprice. See Spect. Vol. I. N°. 29. p. 121. 12mo Edit. The excellence of Mr. ADDISON both as a man and a writer, hath almoſt conſecrated his miſtakes; and the influence of his judgment in the preſent caſe is the more to be feared, becauſe it is much better known, that he had an exceeding fine taſte for the polite arts in general, than that he had a very imperfect knowledge of Muſic in particular; yet the poetry in his Opera of ROSAMOND is as ſtrong a proof of this, as his idea of the French compoſitions.

† A more particular account of the Italian Muſic is given in the beginning of the obſervations ſubjoined to the life.

We left him juſt on the point of his removal to Italy; where he arrived ſoon after the Prince of Tuſcany. FLORENCE, as it is natural to ſuppoſe, was his firſt deſtination; for he was too well known to his Highneſs to need any other recommendations at the court of the Grand Duke, to whoſe palace he had free acceſs at all ſeaſons, and whoſe kindneſs he experienced on all occaſions. The fame of his abilities had raiſed the curioſity of the Duke and his court, and rendered them very impatient to have ſome performance of his compoſing. With leſs experience, and fewer years to mature his judgment, he had hitherto ſucceeded to the utmoſt extent of his wiſhes. But he was now to be brought to the trial in a ſtrange country, where

the ſtyle was as different from that of his own nation, as the manners and cuſtoms of the Italians are from thoſe of the Germans. Senſible as he was of this diſadvantage, his ambition would not ſuffer him to decline the trial to which he was invited. At the age of eighteen he made the Opera of RODRIGO, for which he was preſented with 100 ſequins, and a ſervice of plate. This may ſerve for a ſufficient teſtimony of its favourable reception. VITTORIA, who was much admired both as an Actreſs, and a Singer, bore a principal part in this Opera. She was a fine woman, and had for ſome time been much in the good graces of his Serene Highneſs. But, from the natural reſtleſneſs of certain hearts, ſo little ſenſible was ſhe of her exalted ſituation, that ſhe conceived a deſign of transferring her

her affections to another perſon. HANDEL's youth and comelineſs, joined with his fame and abilities in Muſic, had made impreſſions on her heart. Tho' ſhe had the art to conceal them for the preſent, ſhe had not perhaps the power, certainly not the intention, to efface them.

The nature of his deſign in travelling made it improper for him to ſtay long in any one place. He had ſtayed near a year at Florence, and it was his reſolution to viſit every part of Italy, which was any way famous for its muſical performances. VENICE was his next reſort. He was firſt diſcovered there at a Maſquerade, while he was playing on a harpſichord in his viſor. SCARLATTI happened to be there, and affirmed that it could be no one

but the famous Saxon, or the devil. Being thus detected, he was ſtrongly importuned to compoſe an Opera. But there was ſo little proſpect of either honour or advantage from ſuch an undertaking, that he was very unwilling to engage in it. At laſt, however, he conſented, and in three weeks he finiſhed his AGRIPPINA, which was performed twenty-ſeven nights ſucceſſively; and in a theatre which had been ſhut up for a long time, notwithſtanding there were two other Opera-houſes open at the ſame time; at one of which GASPARINI preſided, as LOTTI did at the other. The audience was ſo enchanted with this performance, that a ſtranger who ſhould have ſeen the manner in which they were affected, would have imagined they had all been diſtracted.

The

The theatre, at almoſt every pauſe, reſounded with ſhouts and acclamations of *viva il caro Saſſone!* and other expreſſions of approbation too extravagant to be mentioned. They were thunderſtruck with the grandeur and ſublimity of his ſtile: for never had they known till then all the powers of harmony and modulation ſo cloſely arrayed, and ſo forcibly combined.

This Opera * drew over all the beſt ſingers from the other houſes. Among the foremoſt of theſe was the famous VITTORIA, who a little before HANDEL's removal to Ve-

* It ſeems that French Horns, and other wind-inſtruments as little known to the *Italians*, were introduced on this occaſion. I believe they never had heard them before, as accompaniments to the voice.

nice had obtained permiſſion of the grand Duke to ſing in one of the houſes there. At AGRIPPINA her inclinations gave new luſtre to her talents. HANDEL ſeemed almoſt as great and majeſtic as APOLLO, and it was far from the lady's intention to be ſo cruel and obſtinate as DAPHNE.

Having mentioned the moſt material occurrences at Venice, we are now to relate his reception at ROME. The fame of his muſical atchievements at Florence and at Venice had reached that metropolis long before him. His arrival therefore was immediately known, and occaſioned civil enquiries and polite meſſages from perſons of the firſt diſtinction there. Among his greateſt admirers was the Cardinal OTTOBONI, a perſon of a refined

taſte,

taſte, and princely magnificence. Beſides a fine collection of pictures and ſtatues, he had a large library of Muſic, and an excellent band of performers, which he kept in conſtant pay. The illuſtrious CORELLI played the firſt violin, and had apartments in the Cardinal's palace. It was a cuſtomary thing with his eminence to have performances of Operas, Oratorios, and ſuch other grand compoſitions, as could from time to time be procured. HANDEL was deſired to furniſh his quota; and there was always ſuch a greatneſs and ſuperiority in the pieces compoſed by him, as rendered thoſe of the beſt maſters comparatively little and inſignificant. There was alſo ſomething in his manner ſo very different from what the Italians had been uſed to, that thoſe who

were ſeldom or never at a loſs in performing any other Muſic, were frequently puzzled how to execute his. CORELLI himſelf complained of the difficulty he found in playing his Overtures. Indeed there was in the whole caſt of theſe compoſitions, but eſpecially in the opening of them, ſuch a degree of fire and force, as never could conſort with the mild graces, and placid elegancies of a genius ſo totally diſſimilar. Several fruitleſs attempts HANDEL had one day made to inſtruct him in the manner of executing theſe ſpirited paſſages. Piqued at the tameneſs with which he ſtill played them, he ſnatches the inſtrument out of his hand; and, to convince him how little he underſtood them, played the paſſages himſelf. But CORELLI, who was a perſon of great modeſty

and meekneſs, wanted no conviction of this ſort; for he ingenuouſly declared that he did not underſtand them; *i. e.* knew not how to execute them properly, and give them the ſtrength and expreſſion they required. When HANDEL appeared impatient, *Ma, caro Saſſone* (ſaid he) *queſta Muſica è nel ſtylo Franceſe, di ch' io non m' intendo* *.

A little incident relating to CORELLI, ſhews his character ſo ſtrongly, that I ſhall be excuſed for reciting it, though foreign to our preſent purpoſe. He was requeſted one evening to play, to a large and polite company, a fine Solo which he

* The Overture for IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO was that which occaſioned CORELLI the greateſt difficulty. At his deſire therefore he made a ſymphony in the room of it, more in the Italian ſtyle.

he had lately compoſed. Juſt as he was in the midſt of his performance, ſome of the number began to diſcourſe together a little unſeaſonably; CORELLI gently lays down his inſtrument. Being aſked whether any thing was the matter with him? Nothing, he replied, he was only afraid that he interrupted converſation. The elegant propriety of this ſilent cenſure, joined with his genteel and good-humoured anſwer, afforded great pleaſure, even to the perſons who occaſioned it. They begged him to reſume his inſtrument, aſſuring him at the ſame time, that he might depend on all the attention, which the occaſion required, and which his merit ought before to have commanded.

Hitherto HANDEL has chiefly been conſidered, if not wholly, in the

the quality of Compoſer. We ſhall now have occaſion to enter into his character as a Player or Performer. And it muſt not be forgot, that, though he was well acquainted with the nature and management of the violin; yet his chief practice, and greateſt maſtery was on the organ and harpſichord.

When he came firſt into Italy, the maſters in greateſt eſteem were ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI, GASPARINI, and LOTTI. The † firſt of theſe he became acquainted with at Cardinal OTTOBONI's. Here alſo he became known to DOMINICO SCARLATTI, now living in Spain, and author of the celebrated leſſons.

† This perſon (*i. e.* the elder SCARLATTI) was author of an Opera entitled, PRINCIPESSA FIDELE, which is reckoned a chéf-d'oeuvre in its kind. He alſo made ſeveral Cantatas very highly eſteemed by the judges of Muſic.

ſons. As he was an exquiſite player on the harpſichord, the Cardinal was reſolved to bring him and HANDEL together for a trial of ſkill. The iſſue of the trial on the harpſichord hath been differently reported. It has been ſaid that ſome gave the preference to SCARLATTI. However, when they came to the Organ there was not the leaſt pretence for doubting to which of them it belonged. SCARLATTI himſelf declared the ſuperiority of his antagoniſt, and owned ingenuouſly, that till he had heard him upon this inſtrument, he had no conception of its powers. So greatly was he ſtruck with his peculiar method of playing, that he followed him all over Italy, and was never ſo happy as when he was with him.

HAN-

HANDEL uſed often to ſpeak of this perſon with great ſatisfaction; and indeed there was reaſon for it; for beſides his great talents as an artiſt, he had the ſweeteſt temper, and the genteeleſt behaviour. On the other hand, it was mentioned but lately by the two PLAS [the famous Haut-bois] who came from Madrid, that SCARLATTI, as oft as he was admired for his great execution, would mention HANDEL, and croſs himſelf in token of veneration.

Though no two perſons ever arrived at ſuch perfection on their reſpective inſtruments, yet it is remarkable that there was a total difference in their manner. The characteriſtic excellence of SCAR-

LATTI ſeems to have conſiſted in a certain elegance and delicacy of expreſſion. HANDEL had an uncommon brilliancy and command of finger: but what diſtinguiſhed him from all other players who poſſeſſed theſe ſame qualities, was that amazing fulneſs, force, and energy, which he joined with them. And this obſervation may be applied with as much juſtneſs to his compoſitions, as to his playing.

While he was at Rome he was alſo much and often at the palaces of the two Cardinals, COLONNA, and PAMPHILII. The latter had ſome talents for Poetry, and wrote the drama of IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO, beſides ſeveral other pieces, which HANDEL ſet at his deſire, ſome in the compaſs of a ſingle evening,

and

and others extempore. † One of theſe was in honour of HANDEL himſelf. He was compared to ORPHEUS, and exalted above the rank of mortals. Whether his Eminence choſe this ſubject as moſt likely to inſpire him with fine conceptions, or with a view to diſcover how far ſo great an Artiſt was proof againſt the aſſaults of vanity, it is not material to determine. HANDEL's modeſty was not however ſo exceſſive, as to hinder him from com-

† The ABBE DU BOS, ſpeaking of that general turn for Muſic for which the Italians from the higheſt to the loweſt have ever been remarkable, continues thus,— Ils ſçavent encore chanter leurs amours dans des vers qu'ils compoſent ſur le champ, & qu'ils accompagnent du ſon de leurs inſtruments. Ils les touchent, ſi non avec délicateſſe, du moins avec aſſez de juſteſſe: c'eſt ce qui s'apelle *improviſer*.

complying with the deſire of his illuſtrious * friend.

As he was familiar with ſo many of the Sacred Order, and of a perſuaſion ſo totally repugnant to theirs, it is natural to imagine that ſome of them would expoſtulate with him on that ſubject. For how could theſe good catholicks be ſuppoſed to bear him any real regard, without endeavouring to lead him out of the road to damnation? Being preſſed very cloſely on this article by one of theſe exalted Eccleſiaſtics, he replied, that he was neither qualified, nor diſpoſed to enter into enquiries of this ſort, but was reſolved to die a member of that communion, whether true or falſe, in which he was born and bred. No hopes appearing

* This expreſſion will not be thought too ſtrong by thoſe who know what ſincere eſteem and cordial regard he attracted from perſons of the higheſt diſtinction.

pearing of a real converſion, the next attempt was to win him over to outward conformity. But neither arguments, nor offers had any effect, unleſs it were that of confirming him ſtill more in the principles of proteſtantiſm. Theſe applications were made only by a few perſons. The generality looked upon him as a man of honeſt, though miſtaken principles, and therefore concluded that he would not eaſily be induced to change them. While he was at Rome he made a kind of Oratorio entitled, RESURRECTIONE, and one hundred and fifty Cantatas, beſides Sonatas and other Muſic.

From Rome he removed to NAPLES, where, as at moſt other places, he had a palazzo at command, and was provided with table, coach, and all other accommoda-

tions. While he was at this capital, he made ACIS and GALATEA, the words Italian, and the Muſic different from ours. It was compoſed at the requeſt of DONNA LAURA, whether a Portugueze or a Spaniſh Princeſs, I will not be certain. But the pomp and magnificence of this lady ſhould ſeem to ſpeak her of Spaniſh extraction. For ſhe lived, acted, and converſed with a ſtate truly regal.

How HANDEL executed his taſk, we may gueſs from what he has ſince produced on the ſame and other ſubjects, under all the diſadvantages of a language leſs ſoft and ſonorous, and of Dramas conſtructed without art or judgment, order or conſiſtency.

While he was at Naples he received invitations from moſt of the prin-

principal perſons who lived within reach of that capital; and lucky was he eſteemed, who could engage him ſooneſt, and detain him longeſt. After he quitted Naples, he made a ſecond viſit to Florence, Rome, and Venice. Meeting with many of his friends, he made ſome ſtay at each of thoſe places. The whole time of his abode in Italy was ſix years. During this interval he had made abundance of Muſic, and ſome in almoſt every ſpecies of compoſition. Theſe early fruits of his ſtudies would doubtleſs be vaſt curioſities could they now be met with. The lovers of the art would regard them with ſomething of the ſame veneration, which the Literati would pay to the precious remains of a LIVY, a CÆSAR, or a TACITUS! Indeed the few fragments of thoſe pieces which have come to

our hands, ſerve only to increaſe our concern for the parts which have periſhed. And when the Reader is informed, that the two firſt Movements of HANDEL's ſeventh Suite in the 1ſt Vol. of his Leſſons formerly ſtood for the Overture in his famous Opera of AGRIPPINA; he will be leſs ſurpriſed at the extravagant admiration of a Venetian audience, than at this effort of his genius before he was well nineteen. From ſuch a ſpecimen, he will form ſome judgment of the work itſelf: he will be the more anxious for his other juvenile productions, ſome of which are probably loſt, and the reſt only to be met with among the few Virtuoſi, whoſe enthuſiaſtic veneration for all that is truly great and excellent in its kind, hath acquired them that title; and of whom it is difficult

cult to ſay, whether they are more active and indefatigable in the ſearch of ſuch treaſure, or more careful and vigilant in the guarding of it.

HANDEL having now been long enough in Italy effectually to anſwer the purpoſe of his going thither, began to think of returning to his native country. Not that he intended this to be the end of his travels; for his curioſity was not yet allay'd, nor likely to be ſo while there was any muſical coutt which he had not ſeen. HANOVER was the firſt he ſtopped at. STEFFANI was there, and had met with favour and encouragement equal, if poſſible, to his ſingular deſert. This perſon (whoſe character is elegantly ſketched by a lover of his Art and friend to his memory) he

had ſeen at Venice, the place of his nativity. Such an acquaintance he was glad to renew: for STEFFANI's compoſitions were excellent; his temper was exceedingly amiable; and his behaviour polite and genteel. Thoſe who are inclined to ſee a fuller account of him, may conſult thoſe Memoirs of his Life, conſiſting indeed of a very few pages, but ſufficient to do him great honour. We ſhall ſoon have occaſion to mention him again, and therefore ſhall only add at preſent, that he was Maſter of the Chapel to his late MAJESTY, when he was only Elector of Hanover. This was an office and title highly creditable there, tho' far inferior to thoſe which he afterwards bore.

At Hanover there was alſo a Nobleman who had taken great notice

tice of HANDEL in Italy, and who did him great ſervice (as will appear ſoon) when he came to ENGLAND for the ſecond time. This perſon was Baron KILMANSECK. He introduced him at court, and ſo well recommended him to his Electoral Highneſs, that he immediately offered him a penſion of 1500 Crowns per annum as an inducement to ſtay. Tho' ſuch an offer from a Prince of his character was not to be neglected, HANDEL loved liberty too well to accept it haſtily, and without reſerve. He told the Baron how much he owed to his kind and effectual recommendation, as well as to his Highneſs's goodneſs and generoſity. But he alſo expreſſed his apprehenſions that the favour intended him would hardly be conſiſtent either with the promiſe he had actually made to vi-

ſit the court of the Elector Palatine, or with the reſolution he had long taken to paſs over into England, for the ſake of ſeeing that of LONDON.†. Upon this objection, the Baron conſulted his Highneſs's pleaſure, and HANDEL was then acquainted, that neither his promiſe nor his reſolution ſhould be ſuperſeded by his acceptance of the penſion propoſed. He had leave to be abſent for a twelve-month or more, if he choſe it; and to go whitherſoever he pleaſed. On theſe eaſy conditions he thankfully accepted it.

To this handſome penſion the place of Chapel-maſter was ſoon after added, on the voluntary reſignation of

† It ſeems he had received ſtrong invitations to England from the Duke of Mancheſter.

of STEFFANI. He thought ſuch an office not perfectly conſiſtent with the high titles of Biſhop and Ambaſſador, with which he was now inveſted. And he was glad of this, or any other opportunity of obliging HANDEL. Notwithſtanding the new favour conferred upon him, he was ſtill in poſſeſſion of the privilege before allowed him, to perform his engagements, and purſue his travels. He conſidered it as his firſt and principal engagement to pay a viſit to his Mother at Hall. Her extreme old-age, and total blindneſs, tho' they promiſed him but a melancholy interview, rendered this inſtance of his duty and regard the more neceſſary. When he had paid his reſpects to his relations and friends (among whom his old Maſter ZACKAW was by no means forgot)

got) he ſet out for DUSSELDORP. The Elector Palatine was much pleaſed with the punctual performance of his promiſe, but as much diſappointed to find that he was engaged elſewhere. At parting he made him a preſent of a fine ſet of wrought plate for a deſert, and in ſuch a manner as added greatly to its value.

From Duſſeldorp he made the beſt of his way through HOLLAND and embarqued for ENGLAND. It was in the winter of the year 1710, when he arrived at LONDON, one of the moſt memorable years of that longeſt, but moſt proſperous war (next to the preſent) which England had ever waged with a foreign power. For during this period ſcarce a mail arrived from Holland, which

which did not bring ſome freſh account of victories or advantages gained by the Engliſh Hero over the armies of a Monarch, but lately the terror of Europe, tho' now the ſcorn of every Dutch Burgomaſter. Nothing indeed ſeemed wanting to compleat the national felicity, but a perſon capable of charming down, by the magic of his melody, that evil ſpirit of faction and party, which fortune ſeems, at this time, to have conjured up, as it were in pure pity to her former favourite, the afflicted LEWIS! But HANDEL, great as he was, could not do for England, what David did for Saul. The ſame ſpirit which had ſo often appeared in the courſe of the war, preſided at the congreſs for peace. The Muſic which HANDEL compoſed on the completion of it, will be

be mentioned elſewhere. In the mean time, it may not be amiſs to ſay a word or two on the ſtate of Muſic at this his firſt coming into England.

Excepting a few good compoſitions in the church ſtyle, and of a very old date, I am afraid there was little to boaſt of, which we could call our own. At this time Operas were a ſort of new acquaintance, but began to be eſtabliſhed in the affections of the Nobility, many of whom had heard and admired performances of this kind in the country which gave them birth. But the conduct of them here, *i. e.* all that regards the drama, or plan, including alſo the machinery, ſcenes, and decorations, was fooliſh and abſurd almoſt beyond imagination.

The

The laſt Pope but one was ſo exceedingly entertained with Mr. Addison's humourous account of this curious management, that on reading his papers relating to it, he laughed till he ſhook his ſides. Mr. Addison ſeems, a little unfairly, to impute this vitiated taſte to the growing fondneſs for every thing that was Italian. It is far from impoſſible, that the Manager might have found this taſte eſtabliſhed here, and have been obliged to conform to it. Who or what the Compoſers were, we are not informed; nor is it very material to enquire. For, from the account of the commencement of the Italian Opera here, as we find it in the 18th N° of the Spectator, it is plain, that, what with the confuſion of languages, and the tranſpoſition of

paſſions

paſſions and ſentiments owing to that cauſe, the beſt Compoſer could hardly be diſtinguiſhed from the worſt. The arrival of HANDEL put an end to this reign of nonſenſe.

The report of his uncommon abilities had been conveyed to England before his arrival, and through various channels. Some perſons here had ſeen him in Italy, and others during his reſidence at Hanover. He was ſoon introduced at Court, and honoured with marks of the Queen's favour. Many of the nobility were impatient for an Opera of his compoſing. To gratify this eagerneſs, RINALDO, the firſt he made in England, was finiſhed in a fortnight's time. The words of the Opera are by ROSSI, the firſt

ſen-

ſentence of whoſe preface is quoted by the Spectator. This contains a ſort of panegyric on his own poetry, for which however he has ſoon after the modeſty to make an apology. As it is ſomewhat curious, I ſhall preſent the reader with a little ſpecimen of it.

" Gradiſci, ti prego, diſcretto lettore, queſta mia rapida fatica, e ſe non merita le tue lodi, almeno non privarla del tuo compatimento, chi dirò più toſto guiſtizia per un tempo così riſtretto: poiche il Signer HENDEL, Orfeo del noſtro ſecolo, nel porla in Muſica, a pena mi diede tempo di ſcrivere; e viddi, con mio grande ſtupore, in due ſole ſettimane armonizata al maggior grado di perfezzione un Opera intiera."

The

The ſubject-matter of this Opera was furniſhed to Rossi by the late Mr. Aaron Hill, who alſo gave the publick an Engliſh verſion of it. We learn from his preface, that at this time the Theatre at the Hay-Market was under his direction. And it appears from the account of his life prefixed to the laſt edition of his dramatic works, that the year before he was manager of that at Drury-Lane. The character of this perſon ſeems to have been almoſt as ſingular as his adventures. Born of a good family, and endowed with ſome natural talents, he might perhaps have arrived at that eminence to which he aſpired, could he have confined himſelf to any ſingle purſuit. But he was one of thoſe active and enterpriſing ſpirits, that attempt every thing, and, for want of diſ-

cerning their proper province, bring nothing to perfection. He travelled much, read much, and wrote much; and all, as it ſhould ſeem, to very little purpoſe. His intimate acquaintance with the moſt eminent perſons of an age ſo fruitful in *beaux Eſprits*, inflamed his natural ardour to diſtinguiſh himſelf in the *belles Lettres*. He fancied that he was deſtined to be a great Poet, and the high compliments he received from one, who was really ſuch, confirmed him in that error. Whether this doth not create ſome doubt of that ſincerity and plain-dealing, on which Mr. Pope piqued himſelf ſo much, I leave to be determined by thoſe, who underſtand the motives on which he acted. His noble friend had been equally laviſh in his praiſes of Mr. Hill, and

the grounds of Mr. POPE's quarrel with both, or rather, of their quarrel with him, were juſt the ſame. When he found it neceſſary to be more temperate in his commendations, this honeſt reſerve was called ill treatment. Among authors there is nothing ſo common as theſe effects of extravagant, or ill-placed approbation.

From Poetry to Muſic the paſſage was natural and eaſy. But from compoſing Dramas to be ſet, to the extracting oil from Beech-nuts, was a tranſition quite peculiar to ſuch a verſatile genius as Mr. HILL. The connexion betwixt the orcheſtra and the alembic it is difficult to diſcover.

To return to our account of RINALDO. In this Opera the famous

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NICOLINI ſung. Its ſucceſs was very great, and his engagements at Hanover the ſubject of much concern with the lovers of Muſic. For when he could return to England, or whether he could at all, was yet very uncertain. His Playing was thought as extraordinary as his Muſic. One of the principal performers here uſed to ſpeak of it with aſtoniſhment, as far tranſcending that of any perſon he had ever known, and as quite peculiar to himſelf. Another, who had affected to diſbelieve the reports of his abilities before he came, was heard to ſay, from a too great confidence in his own, "Let "him come! we'll Handle him, "I warrant ye!" There would be no excuſe for recording ſo poor a pun, if any words could be found, capable of conveying the

character of the ſpeaker with equal force and clearneſs. But the moment he heard HANDEL on the organ, this great man in his own eye ſhrunk into nothing.

He had now been a full twelvemonth in England, and it was time for him to think of returning to Hanover. When he took leave of the Queen at her court, and expreſſed his ſenſe of the favours conferred on him, her Majeſty was pleaſed to add to them by large preſents, and to intimate her deſire of ſeeing him again. Not a little flattered with ſuch marks of approbation from ſo illuſtrious a perſonage, he promiſed to return, the moment he could obtain permiſſion from the Prince, in whoſe ſervice he was retained.

Soon after his return to Hanover he made twelve chamber Duettos for the practice of the late Queen, then electoral Princeſs. The character of theſe is well known to the judges in Muſic. The words for them were written by the Abbate MAURO HORTENSIO, who had not diſdained on other occaſions to miniſter to the maſters of harmony.

Beſides theſe Duettos (a ſpecies of compoſition of which the Princeſs and court were particularly fond) he compoſed variety of other things for voices and inſtruments.

Towards the end of the year 1712, he obtained leave of the Elector to make a ſecond viſit to England, on condition that he en-

gaged to return within a reaſonable time.

It was not many months after his arrival at LONDON that the peace of Utrecht was brought to a concluſion. Each year of this memorable reign had been ſo crowded with heroic atchievements and grand events, that the poets and painters of our iſland ſeem to have ſunk, as it were, under the load of matter, which had been heaped upon them. And had our muſicians been thought equal to the taſk, a foreigner would hardly have been applied to for the ſong of triumph and thankſgiving, which was now wanted. The illuſtrious family which had taken HANDEL into its patronage, had not only been deeply concerned, but highly diſtinguiſhed, in the courſe

courſe of the war. The military talents, and perſonal bravery of its members had contributed to its proſperous iſſue. And not only the auguſt houſe of Hanover, but moſt of the proteſtant Princes of the country to which he was indebted for his birth and education, had concurred in the reduction of that overgrown power, which long had menaced their religion and liberty. Theſe circumſtances produced that particular ſort of intereſt and attachment, which, when joined to the dignity and importance of a ſubject, diſpoſe an artiſt to the utmoſt exertion of his powers. No performance can be thoroughly excellent, unleſs it is wrought *con amore*, as the Italians expreſs it. HANDEL, it muſt be owned, had all theſe advantages. And it is not too much,

perhaps it is too little to ſay, that the work was anſwerable to them. But let the grand TE DEUM AND JUBILATE ſpeak for themſelves! Our buſineſs is not to play the panegyriſt, but the hiſtorian.

The great character of the Operas which HANDEL had made in Italy and Germany, and the remembrance of RINALDO joined with the poor proceedings at the Haymarket, made the nobility very deſirous that he might again be employed in compoſing for that theatre. To their applications her Majeſty was pleaſed to add the weight of her own authority; and, as a teſtimony of her regard to his merit, ſettled upon him a penſion for life of 200 *l. per Annum.*

This

This act of the royal bounty was the more extraordinary, as his foreign engagements were not unknown.

Of the ſeveral Operas which he made during this period ſome account will be given in another place. The time had again elapſed to which the leave he had obtained, could in reaſon be extended. But whether he was afraid of repaſſing the ſea, or whether he had contracted an affection for the diet of the land he was in; ſo it was, that the promiſe he had given at his coming away, had ſomehow ſlipt out of his memory.

On the death of the Queen in 1714, his late Majeſty came over. HANDEL, conſcious how ill he had deſerved at the hands of his gra-

cious patron, now invited to the throne of theſe kingdoms by all the friends of our happy and free conſtitution, did not dare to ſhew himſelf at court. To account for his delay in returning to his office, was no eaſy matter. To make an excuſe for the non-performance of his promiſe, was impoſſible. From this ugly ſituation he was ſoon relieved by better luck than perhaps he deſerved. It happened that his noble friend Baron Kilmanſeck was here. He, with ſome others among the nobility, contrived a method for reinſtating him in the favour of his Majeſty; the clemency of whoſe nature was ſoon experienced by greater perſons on a much more trying occaſion.

The King was perſuaded to form a party on the water. HANDEL was

was appriſed of the deſign, and adviſed to prepare ſome Muſic for that occaſion. It was performed and conducted by himſelf, unknown to his Majeſty, whoſe pleaſure on hearing it was equal to his ſurpriſe. He was impatient to know whoſe it was, and how this entertainment came to be provided without his knowledge. The Baron then produced the delinquent, and aſked leave to preſent him to his Majeſty, as one that was too conſcious of his fault to attempt an excuſe for it; but ſincerely deſirous to attone for the ſame by all poſſible demonſtrations of duty, ſubmiſſion, and gratitude, could he but hope that his Majeſty, in his great goodneſs, would be pleaſed to accept them. This interceſſion was accepted without any difficulty. HANDEL was reſtored to favour, and his Muſic

Muſic honoured with the higheſt expreſſions of the royal approbation. As a token of it, the King was pleaſed to add a penſion for life of 200 *l.* a year to that which Queen ANNE had before given him. Some years after, when he was employed to teach the young Princeſſes, another penſion of the ſame value was added to the former by her late Majeſty.

In the year 1715, he made the Opera of AMADIGE, as appears from the liſt annexed. I cannot find that he was employed in making any others between this time and the year 1720, excepting thoſe of TESEO and PASTOR FIDO: for tho' they have no dates to inform us with certainty when they were compoſed, they are known to have been among his earlieſt productions of

of this kind, and muſt have been performed in ſome part of the interval above-mentioned.

During the three firſt years of it, he was chiefly, if not conſtantly, at the Earl of BURLINGTON's. The character of this nobleman, as a ſcholar and virtuoſo, is univerſally known. As Mr. POPE was very intimate with his Lordſhip, it frequently happened that he and HANDEL were together at his table. After the latter had played ſome of the fineſt things he ever compoſed, Mr. POPE * declared,

* The Poet one day aſked his friend Dr. ARBUTHNOT, of whoſe knowledge in Muſic he had a high idea, What was his real opinion in regard to HANDEL as a Maſter of that Science? The Doctor immediately replied, "Conceive the higheſt that you can of his abilities, and they are much beyond any thing that you *can* conceive."

clared, that they gave him no ſort of pleaſure; that his ears were of that untoward make, and reprobate caſt, as to receive his Muſic, which he was perſuaded was the beſt that could be, with as much indifference as the airs of a common ballad. A perſon of his excellent underſtanding, it is hard to ſuſpect of affectation. And yet it is as hard to conceive, how an ear ſo perfectly attentive to all the delicacies of rhythm and poetical numbers, ſhould be totally inſenſible to the charms of muſical ſounds. An attentiveneſs too, which was as diſcernible in his manner of reading, as it is in his method of writing. But perhaps the extravagant and injudicious praiſes, which the paſſionate admirers of the Art are apt to beſtow on ſuch occaſions, might provoke one of his ſatyric turn to

expreſs himſelf more ſtrongly than he would otherwiſe have done. Perhaps too, a Genius ſo fond of *exploring* characters, and ſo eminently ſkilled in *drawing* them, might think ſuch an Artiſt as HANDEL a proper ſubject for experiments in this way. The greateſt talents are often accompanied with the greateſt weakneſſes. But the Bard was much deceived if he imagined him weak enough to be mortified by a declaration, which, whether real or pretended, deſerved not the leaſt regard. HANDEL minded it juſt as much as POPE would have done a like aſſurance from *him* with reſpect to Poems, which all the world beſides have agreed to admire.

The remaining two years he ſpent at CANNONS, a place which

was

was then in all its glory, but remarkable for having much more of art than nature, and much more coſt than art. Of the Muſic he made for the Chapel there, ſome account will be given in another place. Whether HANDEL was *provided* as a mere implement of grandeur, or *choſen* from motives of a ſuperior kind, it is not for us to determine. This one may venture to aſſert, that the having ſuch a Compoſer, was an inſtance of *real* magnificence, ſuch as no private perſon, or ſubject; nay, ſuch as no prince or potentate on the earth could at that time pretend to.

During the laſt year of his reſidence at Cannons, a project was formed by the Nobility for erecting an academy at the Haymarket. The

The intention of this muſical Society, was to ſecure to themſelves a conſtant ſupply of Operas to be compoſed by HANDEL, and performed under his direction. For this end a ſubſcription was ſet on foot: and as his late Majeſty was pleaſed to let his name appear at the head of it, the Society was dignified with the title of the Royal Academy. The ſum ſubſcribed being very large, † it was intended to continue for fourteen years certain. But as yet it was in its embrio-ſtate, being not fully formed till a year or two after.

HANDEL therefore, after he quitted his employment at Cannons, was adviſed to go over to DRESDEN in queſt of Singers. Here he engaged

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† The KING ſubſcribed 1000 *l.* and the Nobility 40,000 *l.*

gaged SENESINO and DURISTANTI, whom he brought over with him to ENGLAND.

At this time BUONONCINI and ATTILIO compoſed for the Opera, and had a ſtrong party in their favour. Great reaſon they ſaw to be jealous of ſuch a rival as HANDEL, and all the intereſt they had was employed to decry his Muſic, and hinder him from coming to the Haymarket: but theſe attempts were defeated by the powerful aſſociation above-mentioned, at whoſe deſire he had juſt been to Dreſden for Singers.

In the year 1720, he obtained leave to perform his Opera of RADAMISTO. If perſons who are now living, and who were preſent at that performance may be credited, the

the applauſe it received was almoſt as extravagant as his AGRIPPINA had excited: the crowds and tumults of the houſe at Venice were hardly equal to thoſe at LONDON. In ſo ſplendid and faſhionable an aſſembly of ladies (to the excellence of their taſte we muſt impute it) there was no ſhadow of form, or ceremony, ſcarce indeed any appearance of order or regularity, politeneſs or decency. Many, who had forc'd their way into the houſe with an impetuoſity but ill ſuited to their rank and ſex, actually fainted through the exceſſive heat and cloſeneſs of it. Several gentlemen were turned back, who had offered forty ſhillings for a ſeat in the gallery, after having deſpaired of getting any in the pit or boxes.

But, it may be thought, that the great excellence of SENESINO, both as to voice and action, might have a conſiderable ſhare in the wonderful impreſſions made upon the audience. For, by virtue of great advantages in the repreſentation, many performances of little or no value, have not only paſſed, but been well received.—To the ladies eſpecially, the merits of SENESINO would be much more obvious, than thoſe of HANDEL.—Perhaps they would. That *all* depended on the Compoſer, I am as far from aſſerting, as I am from believing that any other perſon could have ſhewn ſuch a ſinger to equal advantage. Let any impartial and competent judge conſider, whether it is likely that the whole muſical world could have

have afforded a compoſer beſides himſelf, capable of furniſhing SENESINO with ſuch a ſong, as that of Ombra Cara in the very Opera before us.

The great ſucceſs of it matur'd the project before concerted for eſtabliſhing an academy. For it could not be effected at once, as a conſiderable number of great perſons had been inſtrumental in bringing over BUONONCINI and ATTILIO. And theſe foreigners they were the more unwilling to abandon, becauſe they really had abilities in their profeſſion. Perhaps the conteſts ran as high on both ſides, as if the object of them had been much more important. Yet I cannot agree with ſome, who think them of no importance, and treat them as ridiculous. Thoſe who thought

their honour engaged to ſupport the old Compoſers; who really preferred them to HANDEL; or fancied that it was a defect of humanity, or an act of injuſtice to diſcard them, not becauſe they were unfit for their office, but becauſe another foreigner was come, who was thought to be fitter; — had ſurely a right to intereſt themſelves warmly in their defence, at a time when they were ſo much in want of aſſiſtance.

And thoſe, on the other hand, might as reaſonably join in oppoſing them, who were firmly convinced of HANDEL's great ſuperiority; and who thought it for the honour of the nation to inliſt in its ſervice the moſt eminent artiſts. The old ones, in their opinion, had no right to complain of any preference

given to another, provided they were duly paid for the time they had been engaged. When diſputes are carried on with any heat or violence, it is uſually taken for granted, that both ſides are in the wrong. But theſe qualities ſo diſagreeable in their operation, are often ſalutary in their effects. Ill as things may ſeem to be managed with them, it is poſſible they might be managed worſe without them. For theſe eager enquiries, and warm debates concerning what is fitteſt to be choſen and preferred, lead us to the knowledge of what is beſt and moſt perfect in the kind. By lighting up the flame of emulation in the breaſts of contending artiſts, they contribute to the advancement of the art. Deſtroy theſe workings of paſſion, and

there is an end of patriots, poets, and virtuoſos.

Perhaps therefore the uſes of quarrelling may compenſate for all its inconveniences. But if not, the art of quarrelling, without loſing one's temper, is, I fear, too difficult for even courts to teach or practiſe.—But I wander from my ſubject.

Such then was the ſtate of things in the year 1720, at the time RADAMISTO was performed. The ſucceeding winter brought this muſical diſorder to its criſis. In order to terminate all matters in controverſy, it was agreed to put them on this fair iſſue. The ſeveral parties concerned were to be jointly employed in making an Opera, in which each of them was

to take a diſtinct act. And he, who by the general ſuffrage, ſhould be allowed to have given the beſt proofs of his abilities, was to be put into poſſeſſion of the houſe. The propoſal was accepted, whether from choice, or neceſſity, I cannot ſay. The event was anſwerable to the expectations of HANDEL's friends. His act was the laſt, and the ſuperiority of it ſo very manifeſt, that there was not the leaſt pretence for any further doubts or diſputes. I ſhould have mentioned, that as each made an overture, as well as an act, the affair ſeemed to be decided even by the overture with which HANDEL's began. The name of the Opera was MUZIO SCÆVOLA *.

The

* For further particulars of the overture in this Opera, ſee the note to page 44.

The academy being now firmly eſtabliſhed, and HANDEL appointed Compoſer to it, all things went on proſperouſly for a courſe of between nine and ten years. And this may juſtly be called the period of muſical glory, whether we conſider the performances or the performers, moſt certainly not to be ſurpaſſed, if equalled, in any age or country. The names and dates of the Operas exhibited within this memorable interval, may be found in their regular ſeries by turning to the catalogue. And ſome brief and general account of their character is given in the obſervations at the end of it.

The perfect authority which HANDEL maintained over the ſingers and the band, or rather the total ſub-

ſubjection in which he held them, was of more conſequence than can well be imagined. It was the chief means of preſerving that order and decorum, that union and tranquillity, which ſeldom are found to ſubſiſt for any long continuance in muſical Societies. Indeed, all Societies, like the animal body, ſeem to carry in their very frame and frabric, the ſeeds of their own diſſolution. This happens ſooner or later, only as thoſe are forwarded or retarded by different cauſes.

SENESINO, who, from his firſt appearance, had taken deep root, and had long been growing in the affections of thoſe, whoſe right to dominion the moſt civilized nations have ever acknowledged, began to feel his ſtrength and importance. He felt them ſo much, that what

what he had hitherto regarded as legal government, now appeared to him in the light of downright tyranny. HANDEL, perceiving that he was grown leſs tractable and obſequious, reſolved to ſubdue theſe Italian humours, not by lenitives, but ſharp corroſives. To *manage* him he diſdained; to controul him with a high-hand, he in vain attempted. The one was perfectly refractory; the other was equally outrageous. In ſhort, matters had proceeded ſo far, that there were no hopes of an accommodation. The merits of the quarrel I know nothing of. Whatever they were, the Nobility would not conſent to his deſign of parting with SENESINO, and HANDEL was determined to have no farther concerns with him. FAUSTINA and CUZZONI, as if ſeized with the contagion of diſcord,

diſcord, ſtarted queſtions of ſuperiority, and urged their reſpective claims to it with an eagerneſs and acrimony, which occaſioned a total diſ-union betwixt them.

And thus the Academy, after it had continued in the moſt flouriſhing ſtate for upwards of nine years, was at once diſſolved.

The late Laureat, who, now and then, has ſome ſtrokes of humour, (for dulneſs too hath its lucid intervals) diverts himſelf much on the ſubject of theſe muſical frays. The unlucky effects of them at the marriage of the late Duke of Parma, he deſcribes with that pert kind of pleaſantry, that native *gaillardiſe* which attended him through life. The fondneſs for Italian Singers, he thinks unaccountable: the expence

pence and trouble they occaſion, exorbitant and ridiculous. He calls them coſtly Canary-birds; and on their behaviour at the marriage ſolemnity juſt mentioned above, laments as follows, " What a pity it is, that theſe froward Miſſes and Maſters of Muſic, had not been engaged to entertain the court of ſome King of Morocco, that could have known a good Opera from a bad one! With how much eaſe would ſuch a Director have brought them to better order?" —But, had he known any thing of the true † ſpirit of Handel, he would not have wiſhed them under better government.

† Having one day ſome words with Cuzzoni on her refuſing to ſing *Falſa imagine* in Ottone; Oh! Madame, (ſaid he) je ſçais bien que Vous êtes une veritable Diableſſe: mais je Vous ferai ſçavoir, moi, que je ſuis Beelzebub le *Chéf* des Diables. With this he took her up by the waiſt, and, if ſhe made any more words,

ment. It is true they mutinied, and rebelled at laſt. But the ſlaves of Aſiatic and of African Monarchs, have often done as much.

He remained inflexible in his reſolution to puniſh SENESINO for refuſing him that ſubmiſſion, which he had been uſed to receive, and which he thought he had a right to demand: but a little pliability would have ſaved him abundance of trouble. The vacancy made by the removal of ſuch a Singer was not eaſily ſupplied. The umbrage which he had given to many of the Nobility, by his implacable reſentments

words, ſwore that he would fling her out of the window.

It is to be noted, that this was formerly one of the methods of executing criminals in ſome parts of Germany; a proceſs not unlike that of the Tarpeian rock, and probably derived from it.

ments againſt a perſon whoſe talents they ſo much admired, was likely to create him a dangerous oppoſition. For, tho' he continued at the Hay-market, yet, in the heat of theſe animoſities, a great part of his audience would melt away. New Singers muſt be ſought, and could not be had any nearer than Italy. The buſineſs of chuſing, and engaging them, could not be diſpatched by a deputy. And the party offended might improve the opportunity of his abſence to his diſadvantage.

In ſpite of all theſe diſcouragements, to Italy he went, as ſoon as he had ſettled an agreement with HEIDEGGAR to carry on Operas in conjunction with him. The agreement was for the ſhort term of three

three years, and ſo ſettled as to ſubſiſt only from year to year.

On his arrival at Rome, he received a very friendly and obliging letter of invitation from cardinal COLONNA, with a promiſe of a very fine picture of his Eminence. But, hearing that the Pretender was then at the Cardinal's, he prudently declined accepting both the invitation and the picture.

After a ſhort ſtay in Italy, he returned with STRADA, BERNACHI, FABRI, BERTOLDI, and others. Being thus embarqued on a new bottom, he went on in conjunction with HEIDEGGER, but not with that even and proſperous gale which had wafted him ſo ſmoothly and pleaſantly through the nine preceding years: for about the time of the

ſeparation at the Hay-market, occaſioned by the diſagreement between HANDEL and his Singers, many of the Nobility raiſed a new ſubſcription in order to carry on another Opera at Lincoln's-inn-fields, in which they could have Singers and Compoſers of their own chuſing. With this view they ſent for PORPORA, FARINELLI, and others. The former was author of ſeveral Cantatas which were much admired, and gave great ſatisfaction to the perſons who employed him. The latter charmed all hearers by his exquiſite voice, which he knew how to manage to the beſt advantage. Tho' HANDEL bore up with great ſpirit and firmneſs againſt this oppoſition, he ſoon felt the effects of it; and yet, at the expiration of the three years partnerſhip with HEIDEGGER, he ventured to

continue

continue Operas at the Hay-market for one year on his own bottom. Finding this attempt no way likely to ſucceed, he left the Hay-market, and on the return of the adverſe party to it, removed to the vacant theatre at Lincoln's-inn-fields. Here he continued but a little while; for he conſidered that the tide of oppoſition was now at its full heighth, and that to ſtem it, his own ſtrength, ſuperior as it was, might not be ſufficient. The little taſte he had already had of adverſity, leſſened that ſelf-confidence which ſucceſs is apt to inſpire. He found that it was not the neceſſary conſequence of great abilities, and that without prudence the greateſt may be almoſt annihilated in the opinions of men. But it is a principal part of prudence, to command our temper on any trial we may chance to re-

ceive; a part of it which, to ſay the truth, he never practiſed or profeſſed. This omiſſion involved him in misfortunes, which taught him another part of prudence (if it muſt be called ſo) which he never ought to have practiſed, much leſs profeſſed, that of conſulting his intereſt at the expence of his art.

He now removed to Convent-garden, and entered into a partnerſhip with RICH, the maſter of that houſe. HASSE and PORPORA were the Compoſers at the Hay-market. When the former was invited over, it is remarkable, that the firſt queſtion he aſked, was, whether HANDEL was dead. Being anſwered in the negative, he refuſed to come, from a perſuaſion, that where his countryman was (for they were both Saxons by birth) no other perſon of the

the ſame profeſſion was likely to make any figure. He could not believe that in a nation which had always been famous for ſenſe and diſcernment, the credit of ſuch an artiſt as HANDEL could ever be impaired. However, this myſtery was explained to him in ſuch a manner, and this explanation accompanied by ſuch offers, that at length he got the better of his ſcruples, and conſented to be engaged. He is remarkable for his fine elevated air, with hardly ſo much as the ſhew of harmony to ſupport it. And this may ſerve not only for a character of HASSE in particular, but of the Italians in general, at the time we are ſpeaking of. The oppoſition in which they were engaged againſt HANDEL, made him look upon that merit in his antagoniſts with much indifference, and upon this defect

with ſtill more contempt. He carried his contempt ſo far, as to endeavour to be as unlike them as poſſible. He could have vanquiſhed his opponents at their own weapons; but he had the ſenſe to diſcover, that the offended and prejudiced ſide would never have acknowledged his victory however deciſive; and that his new friends, for want of underſtanding the nature and uſe of ſuch weapons, would not have diſcerned it however obvious. From hence he gradually fell into that too cloſe and particular attachment to the harmony, which ſometimes led him to neglect the melody, even where it ought moſt to be regarded, I mean in Vocal Muſic. A farther account of the cauſes and conſequences of this omiſſion, may be found in the obſervations on his works.

In

In the ſummer of the year 1733, he made a tour to OXFORD, where there was a public Act, at which he performed his Oratorio of ATHALIAH, compoſed for that ſolemnity. By this journey the damages he had ſuffered in his fortune were ſomewhat repaired, and his reputation more firmly eſtabliſhed. The next winter his Opera of ARIANNA was performed at Convent-garden, while another of the ſame name, compoſed by PORPORA, was acted at the Hay-market. POLYPHEMO by the ſame perſon, and ARTAXERXES by HASSE, gained great applauſe there ſoon after. Though HANDEL had ſome good Singers, none of them could be compared to FARINELLI, who drew all the world to the Hay-market. And it ſoon appeared that the re-

liſh of the Engliſh for Muſic, was not ſtrong enough to ſupport two Operas at a time. There were but few perſons of any other claſs, beſides that of the Nobility, who had much knowledge of the Italian, any notion of ſuch compoſitions, or conſequently any real pleaſure in hearing them. Thoſe among the middling and lower orders, whom affectation or curioſity had drawn to the Theatre at his firſt ſetting out in conjunction with RICH, fell off by degrees. His expences in providing Singers, and in other preparations, had been very large; and his profits were no way proportionate to ſuch charges. At the end of three or four years, inſtead of having acquired ſuch an addition to his fortune, as from his care, induſtry, and abilities, he had reaſon to expect, he was obliged

ged to draw out of the funds almoſt all that he was worth, in order to anſwer the demands upon him. This upſhot put an end for the preſent to all muſical entertainments at Convent-garden, and almoſt put an end to the author of them. The violence of his paſſions made ſuch a diſaſter operate the more terribly.

The obſervation that misfortunes rarely come ſingle, was verified in HANDEL. His fortune was not more impaired, than his health and his underſtanding. His right-arm was become uſeleſs to him, from a ſtroke of the palſy; and how greatly his ſenſes were diſordered at intervals, for a long time, appeared from an hundred inſtances, which are better forgotten than recorded. The moſt violent deviations from

reaſon, are uſually ſeen when the ſtrongeſt faculties happen to be thrown out of courſe.

In this melancholic ſtate, it was in vain for him to think of any freſh projects for retrieving his affairs. His firſt concern was how to repair his conſtitution. But tho' he had the beſt advice, and tho' the neceſſity of following it was urged to him in the moſt friendly manner, it was with the utmoſt difficulty that he was prevailed on to do what was proper, when it was any way diſagreeable. For this reaſon it was thought beſt for him to have recourſe to the vapor-baths of Aix la Chapelle, over which he ſat near three times as long as hath ever been the practice. Whoever knows any thing of the nature of thoſe baths, will, from this inſtance,

form

form ſome idea of his ſurpriſing conſtitution. His ſweats were profuſe beyond what can well be imagined. His cure, from the manner as well as from the quickneſs, with which it was wrought, paſſed with the Nuns for a miracle. When, but a few hours from the time of his quitting the bath, they heard him at the organ in the principal church as well as convent, playing in a manner ſo much beyond any they had ever been uſed to, ſuch a concluſion in ſuch perſons was natural enough. Tho' his buſineſs was ſo ſoon diſpatched, and his cure judged to be thoroughly effected, he thought it prudent to continue at Aix about ſix weeks, which is the ſhorteſt period uſually allotted for bad caſes.

Soon after his return to London in 1736, his ALEXANDER'S FEAST

was performed at Convent-Garden, and was well received.

After much miſmanagement, and various miſunderſtandings at the Hay-market, the glories of that theatre ſeemed quite extinct. Lord MIDDLESEX, deſirous of ſeeing the Opera reſtored to its former ſplendor, undertook the direction of it, and applied to HANDEL, as the fitteſt perſon to ſupply it with compoſitions. He made two Operas for his Lordſhip, FARAMONDO and ALESSANDRO SEVERO; the laſt of which was a Paſticcio, and performed, as well as the other, in the year 1737. For theſe he received 1000*l.* Had he been diſpoſed to make any conceſſions, his friends might eaſily have effected a reconciliation between him and his opponents. All parties would in that caſe have been glad

glad to have ſeen him again at the Hay-market; for at this time all the ſources of Opera-muſic ſeem to have been drained to the very dregs. The ſenſe of his abilities, the preſent exigency in which they were ſo much wanted, the recollection of his loſſes and ſufferings; time itſelf, which as it conſumes many valuable things, ſo it often happily wears out perſonal reſentments:—In ſhort, every thing ſeemed to concur, and nothing was wanting to inſure his future proſperity, excepting a ſpirit which knew how to yield on proper occaſions. From a ſingle benefit made for him at the Hay-market in the year 1738, from which he is ſaid to have received 1500*l.* it is eaſy to gueſs what might have been done to recover his affairs. But he was ſo averſe

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to ſubſcription-engagements, that he reſolved to be for the future on a quite different footing. No proſpects of advantage could tempt him to court thoſe by whom he thought he had been injured and oppreſſed. Full of theſe lofty ſentiments, he returned to Convent-Garden, where he performed a few more Operas, the dates of which may be found in the catalogue. Finding that the taſte of his audience was naturally averſe to this ſpecies of compoſition, he now introduced another, more ſuited to the native gravity and ſolidity of the Engliſh, tho' borrowed from the *concert ſpirituel* of their volatile neighbours on the continent. ESTHER was made originally for the Duke of CHANDOIS, about a year after ACIS *and* GALATEA. After it had been performed at Cannons, it was played

at

at the Crown and Anchor; and this indeed is ſaid to have firſt furniſhed the hint for bringing Oratorios on the ſtage. As the moſt remarkable characters, events, and occurrences contained in the holy ſcriptures, are intended to be repreſented in theſe ſolemn pieces, it is plainly of their nature to be acted, as well as ſung, and accompanied. But the very ſacredneſs and ſolemnity of the ſubjects treated, made even the ſetting them to Muſic appear to ſome perſons little leſs than a prophanation. What ſtrengthened this opinion was probably this, that moſt of the relations which are the ſubject matter of Operas are taken from prophane and fabulous hiſtory. And though Muſic was allowed to lend its aſſiſtance in places of worſhip; yet it ſeemed to be a dangerous innovation to allow it the further

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privilege of canvaſſing in full form religious ſubjects in places of entertainment. It ſeemed to be forming a ſort of alliance between things uſually conſidered in a ſtate of natural oppoſition, the church and theatre. In times when narrow notions were more in vogue, and when even men of ſenſe were governed rather by appearances than by realities, Oratorios would not have been tolerated. In theſe happier days the influence of prejudice was not indeed quite ſtrong enough to exclude theſe noble performances, yet it is even ſtill ſtrong enough to ſpoil them. For are not the very ſame arguments which prevailed for admitting Oratorios ſufficient to juſtify the acting them?

Would not action and geſticulation accommodated to the ſituation and

and ſentiments, joined with dreſſes conformable to the characters repreſented, render the repreſentations more expreſſive and perfect, and conſequently the entertainment much more rational and improving*. Provided no improper characters were introduced, (a thing eaſy to be obviated) what other inconvenience could poſſibly reſult from the further allowance here contended for, it is hard to imagine. But this is ſpoken with perfect ſubmiſſion to the proper judges.

About

* RACINE'S ESTHER and ATHALIAH ſet by LULLI, and performed at the convent of St. Cyr, by Order of Madame DE MAINTENON, had all the advantages of theatrical imitation. Indeed the beſt performance, if properly dramatic, without the helps of ſuitable action, and proper dreſſes, muſt needs loſe a conſiderable part of that force and clearneſs, that life and ſpirit, which reſult from a full and perfect exhibition.

About the year 1729, or 1730, ESTHER and DEBORAH had been performed at the Hay-market with good ſucceſs; with much better indeed than he met with at Convent-Garden, when he tried them there but a few years after. He ſeems not ſufficiently to have conſidered the riſques which he ran in this new undertaking. The diſtance of this theatre from thoſe parts of the town where the nobility chiefly reſide; the relics of the oppoſition not yet extinct, though ſomewhat abated; a ſtyle little ſuited as yet to the apprehenſions of the generality;—theſe, and probably ſome other cauſes, may have concurred to render his attempt inauſpicious in its commencement. Too much accuſtomed to diſappointments to be eaſily diſpirited, he continued

theſe

theſe new entertainments, ſo excellently adapted to the ſeaſon of the year in which they are exhibited, till the beginning of the year 1741. But at this time his affairs again carried ſo ill an aſpect, that he found it neceſſary to try the event of another peregrination. He hoped to find that favour and encouragement in a diſtant capital, which London ſeemed to refuſe him. For even his MESSIAH had met with a cold reception. Either the ſenſe of muſical excellence was become ſo weak, or the power of prejudice ſo ſtrong, that all the efforts of his unparalleled genius and induſtry proved ineffectual.

DUBLIN has always been famous for the gaiety and ſplendor of its court, the opulence and ſpirit of its principal inhabitants, the valour

of its military, and the genius of its learned men. Where ſuch things were held in eſteem he rightly reckoned, that he could not better pave the way to his ſucceſs, than by ſetting out with a ſtriking inſtance and public act of generoſity and benevolence. The firſt ſtep that he made, was to perform his MESSIAH for the benefit of the city-priſon. Such a deſign drew together not only all the lovers of Muſic, but all the friends of humanity. There was a peculiar propriety in this deſign from the ſubject of the Oratorio itſelf; and there was a peculiar grace in it from the ſituation of HANDEL's affairs. They were brought into a better poſture by his journey to Dublin, where he ſtaid between eight and nine months. The reception that he met with, at the ſame time that it

ſhewed

ſhewed the ſtrong ſenſe which the Iriſh had of his extraordinary merit, conveyed a kind of tacit reproach on all thoſe on the other ſide of the water, who had enliſted in the oppoſition againſt him. Mr. POPE in the fourth book of the DUNCIAD has related this paſſage of his hiſtory. A poor phantom, which is made to repreſent the genius of the modern ITALIAN Opera, expreſſes her apprehenſions, and gives her inſtructions to Dulneſs, already alarmed for her own ſafety. The lines are well known, but, for their ſtrong characteriſtic imagery, deſerve to be quoted in this place. They are as follows,

But ſoon, ah ſoon, rebellion will commence,
If Muſic meanly borrows aid from Senſe:
Strong in new arms, lo! giant HANDEL ſtands,
Like bold BRIARIUS with his hundred hands;

To ſtir, to rouſe, to ſhake the ſoul he comes,
And JOVE's own thunders follow MARS's drums,
Arreſt him, empreſs; or you ſleep no more —
She heard,—and drove him to the HIBERNIAN ſhore.

At his return to London in 1741-2, the minds of moſt men were much more diſpoſed in his favour. He immediately recommenced his Oratorios at Convent-Garden. SAMPSON was the firſt he performed. And now (to uſe the expreſſive phraſe of TACITUS) *blandiebatur cæptis fortuna*; Fortune ſeemed rather to court and careſs, than to countenance and ſupport him. This return was the æra of his proſperity. Indeed, in the year 1743, he had ſome return of his paralytic diſorder; and the year after fell under the heavy diſpleaſure of a certain faſhionable lady.

She

She exerted all her influence to ſpirit up a new oppoſition againſt him. But the world could not long be made to believe that her card-aſſemblies were ſuch proper entertainments for Lent, as his Oratorios. It is needleſs to enlarge upon particulars which are eaſily remembered, or to give a minute account of things generally known. It is ſufficient juſt to touch on the moſt remarkable. What is very much ſo, his MESSIAH which had before been received with ſo much indifference, became from this time the favourite Oratorio. As in the year 1741, it was applied to the relief of perſons expoſed to all the miſeries of perpetual confinement; it was afterwards conſecrated to the ſervice of the moſt innocent, moſt helpleſs, and moſt diſtreſſed part of the human ſpecies. The Found-

ling Hoſpital originally reſted on the ſlender foundation of private benefactions. At a time when this inſtitution was yet in its infancy; when all men ſeemed to be convinced of its utility; when nothing was at all problematical but the poſſibility of ſupporting it;—HANDEL formed the noble reſolution to lend his aſſiſtance, and perform his MESSIAH annually for its benefit. The ſums raiſed by each performance were very conſiderable, and certainly of great conſequence in ſuch a criſis of affairs. But what was of much greater, was the magic of his name, and the univerſal character of his ſacred Drama. By theſe vaſt numbers of the nobility and gentry were drawn to the hoſpital; and many, who, at the firſt, had been contented with barely approving the deſign, were afterwards warmly

engaged

engaged in promoting it. In conſequence of this reſort, the attention of the nation was alſo drawn more forcibly to what was indeed the natural object of it. So that it may truly be affirmed, that one of the nobleſt and moſt extenſive charities that ever was planned by the wiſdom, or projected by the piety of men, in ſome degree owes its continuance, as well as proſperity, to the patronage of HANDEL.

The very ſucceſsful application of this wonderful production of his genius to ſo beneficent a purpoſe, reflected equal honour on the Artiſt and the Art.

He continued his Oratorios with uninterrupted ſucceſs, and unrivalled glory, till within eight days of his death: the laſt was performed on

on the 6th of April, and he expired on Saturday the 14th of April 1759. He was buried the 20th by Dr. PEARCE, Biſhop of Roche-ſter, in Weſtminſter-abbey, where, by his own order, and at his own expence, a monument is to be erected to his memory.

In the year 1751, a gutta ſerena deprived him of his ſight. This misfortune ſunk him for a time into the deepeſt deſpondency. He could not reſt until he had undergone ſome operations as fruitleſs as they were painful. Finding it no longer poſſible for him to manage alone, he ſent to Mr. SMITH to deſire that he would play for him, and aſſiſt him in conducting the Oratorios.

His

His faculties remained in their full vigour almoſt to the hour of his diſſolution, as appeared from Songs and Choruſſes, and other Compoſitions, which from the date of them, may almoſt be conſidered as his parting words, his laſt accents! This muſt appear the more ſurpriſing, when it is remembered to how great a degree his mind was diſordered, at times, towards the latter part of his life.

His health had been declining apace for ſeveral months before his death. He was very ſenſible of its approach, and refuſed to be flattered by any hopes of a recovery. One circumſtance was very ominous, I mean the total loſs of appetite, which was come upon him, and which muſt prove more pernicious

cious to a perſon always habituated, as he had been, to an uncommon portion of food and nouriſhment. Thoſe who have blamed him for an exceſſive indulgence in this loweſt of gratifications, ought to have conſidered, that the peculiarities of his conſtitution were as great as thoſe of his character. Luxury and intemperance are relative ideas, and depend on other circumſtances beſides thoſe of quantity and quality. It would be as unreaſonable to confine HANDEL to the fare and allowance of common men, as to expect that a London merchant ſhould live like a Swiſs mechanic. Not that I would abſolve him from *all* blame on this article. He certainly paid more attention to it, than is becoming in any man: but it is ſome excuſe, that Nature had given him ſo vigorous a conſtitution, ſo exquiſite

exquiſite a palate, and ſo craving an appetite; and that fortune enabled him to obey theſe calls, to ſatisfy theſe demands of Nature. They were really ſuch. For beſides the ſeveral circumſtances juſt alledged, there is yet another in his favour; I mean his inceſſant and intenſe application to the ſtudies of his profeſſion. This rendered conſtant and large ſupplies of nouriſhment the more neceſſary to recruit his exhauſted ſpirits. Had he hurt his health or his fortune by indulgences of this kind, they would have been vicious: as he did not, they were at moſt indecorous. As they have been ſo much the ſubject of converſation and pleaſantry, to have taken no notice of them, might have looked like affectation. But it would be folly to enter into the particulars of this

part

part of his hiſtory, and contrary to the deſign of the foregoing ſheets, which is only " to give the Reader thoſe parts of his † character, as a Man, that any way tend to open and explain his character as an Artiſt." So that the connection between this account of his life, and the following obſervations on his works, is cloſer than, at firſt ſight, may be imagined. How far the materials

† It was thought better to leave the Reader to collect his character from the LIFE itſelf, than to attempt the drawing of it in form: a practice which has not ſucceeded over-much, even where it is moſt neceſſary; I mean in the writings of Hiſtorians. Truth hath ſeldom been ſo much as conſulted in theſe ſtudied repreſentations. That conſtant and uniform oppoſition of the ſeveral parts, which, with much force and ſtraining, are made to tally with each other, renders *moſt* characters only a more extended antitheſis, and is ſcarce ever found really to exiſt in *any*. Yet often is this ſpurious brood of affectation and wit, palmed upon the world for the genuine offſpring of education and nature.

materials for the former may be worth the digeſting, can fairly be determined only by examining them in this view. How far they are well digeſted, is another queſtion, which every one will determine for himſelf, excepting the perſon employed in this attempt. But for his induſtry in collecting them, ſuch as they are, they would probably have been loſt in the courſe of a few years. He has nothing to add, but his ſincere wiſhes, that every Artiſt, who is truly deſerving in his profeſſion, may meet with a perſon equally deſirous of doing juſtice to his memory.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CATALOGUE

OF THE

WORKS

OF

George Frederic Handel.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

I Think that the works of HANDEL may conveniently be diſtributed into three claſſes, *viz.*

1.

CHURCH-MUSIC.

2.

THEATRICAL MUSIC.

3.

CHAMBER-MUSIC.

And theſe again into ten inferior or leſſer claſſes, *viz.*

1. ANTHEMS *and* TE DEUMS.
2. ORATORIOS.
3. OPERAS.
4. CONCERTOS, *for* Inſtruments.
5. SONATAS, *for two* Violins *and a* Baſs.

6. LESSONS, *for the* Harpſichord.
7. CHAMBER-DUETTOS.
8. TERZETTOS.
9. CANTATAS *and* PASTORAL PIECES.
10. OCCASIONAL, *or* FESTAL PIECES.

In the following catalogue there are ſeveral compoſitions, *viz.* ALLEGRO ED IL PENSEROSO, TRIUMPH *of* TIME *and* TRUTH, *&c.* which are placed among the Oratorios, becauſe they were performed as ſuch, but do not properly belong to that ſpecies. Indeed they cannot be ſaid to fall under any of the claſſes above deſcribed. However they are not of conſequence enough to form a diſtinct one among the leſſer, any more than the WATER-MUSIC among the larger.

As to the TRIUMPH *of* TIME *and* TRUTH, great part of the Muſic is the ſame with that of IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO, made at Rome many years before, revived in 1757, and performed only once at the Hay-market [in Italian] about the time the Oratorios firſt began.

A great quantity of Muſic, not mentioned in the Catalogue, was made in Italy and Germany. How much of it is yet in being, is not known. Two cheſts-full were left at HAMBURGH, beſides ſome at HANOVER, and ſome at HALL.

THEATRICAL MUSIC.

OPERAS.

ALMERIA, made and performed at Hamburgh.

FLORINDA, Hamburgh.
NERONE, ditto.
RODERIGO, Florence.
AGRIPPINA, Venice.
IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO, Rome. [Serenata.]
ACIGE e GALATEA, Naples. [Serenata.]
RINALDO, London, 1710.
TESEO, ditto.
AMADIGE, ditto, 1715.
PASTOR FIDO, ditto.
RADAMISTO, ditto. 1720.
MUZIO SCÆVOLA, ditto, 23 March, 1721.
OTTONE, ditto, 10 Auguſt, 1722.
FLORIDANTE, ditto. ——— 1723.
FLAVIO, ditto.— 7 May, 1723.
JULIO CÆSARE, ditto—- 1723.
TAMERLANE, ditto, 23 July 1724.
RODELINDA, ditto, 20 Jan. 1725.
SCIPIONE, ditto, 2 March 1726.
ALESSANDRO, ditto, 11 April 1726.

RICARDO, London, 16 May 1727.
AMMETO, ditto, 16 May 1727.
SIROE, ditto, 5 February 1728.
PTOLOMEO, ditto, 19 April 1728.
LOTARIO, ditto, 16 Nov. 1729.
PARTENOPE, ditto, 12 Feb. 1730.
PORO, ditto, 26 January, 1731.
SOSARME, ditto, 4 February 1732.
ORLANDO, ditto, 20 Nov. 1732.
EZIO, ditto, 1733.
ARIANNA, ditto, 5 October 1733.
ARIODANTE, ditto, 24 Oct. 1734.
ALCINA, ditto, 8 April 1735.
*ATALANTA, ditto, 20 April 1736.
GIUSTINO, ditto, 7 Septemb. 1736.
ARMINIO, ditto, 30 Octob. 1736.
BERENICE, ditto, 18 Jan. 1737.
FARAMONDO, ditto, 24 Dec. 1737.
ALESSANDRO SEVERO, ditto. [Pasticcio.]
SERSE, ditto, 6 February 1738.

* Performed at the Princeſs of ORANGE's wedding.

* IMENEO, ditto, 10 Oct. 1740.
DIEDAMIA, London, 20 Oct. 1740.

ORATORIOS.

DEBORAH, 21 Feb. 1733.
ESTHER.
ATHALIAH, 7 June, 1733.
ALEXANDER's FEAST, 17 Jan. 1736.
ISRAEL *in* EGYPT, 11 Oct. 1738.
ALLEGRO ED IL PENSEROSO, 1739.
SAUL, 1740.
MESSIAH, 12 April, 1741.
SAMPSON, 12 Oct. 1742.
† SEMELE, 4 July, 1743.
SUSANNAH, 9 Auguſt, 1743.
BELSHAZZAR.
HERCULES, 17 Auguſt 1744.

OCCA-

* Performed on occaſion of his late ROYAL HIGHNESS the PRINCE of WALES's wedding.

† An Engliſh Opera, but called an Oratorio, and performed as ſuch at Covent-Garden. The words of it by CONGREVE.

† Occasional Oratorio, 1745.
Judas Macchabæus, 11 Aug. 1746.
Joseph, 1746.
Alexander Balus, 30 June 1747.
Joshua, 18 Aug. 1747.
Solomon, 13 June 1748.
Theodora, 18 July 1749.
Jeptha, 20 Aug. 1751.
Triumph *of* Time *and* Truth.

Serenatas.

Il Trionfo del Tempo, Rome.
Acige e Galatea, Naples.
*Acis *and* Galatea, for the Duke of Chandois, about the year 1721.
Parnasso in Festa, [an Italian entertainment, ſung at the Hay-market.]
Choice of Hercules.

Church-

† Performed on occaſion of the victory gained at Culloden, by his Royal Highneſs the Duke of Cumberland.

* The words of this piece wrote by Mr. Gay.

CHURCH-MUSIC.

A grand Te Deum and Jubilate for the peace of Utrecht, 1713.

Four Coronation Anthems, 1727.

Several Anthems made for the Duke of Chandois between 1717, and 1720.

Several more; as a Funeral Service for her late MAJESTY Queen CAROLINE; in all about twenty-three.

Three more Te Deums; one of which was on the occaſion of the victory at DETTINGEN.

CHAMBER-MUSIC.

Cantatas, [the greateſt part made at Hanover, and other places abroad; in all about 200.

Chamber-Duettos, [twelve made at Hanover, and two after he came to England.]

Serenatas,

Serenatas, [moſt of them made abroad, and ſome few at his firſt coming to England, one of which was for Queen ANNE, and performed at St. James's, but afterwards loſt.]

INSTRUMENTAL-MUSIC.

Muſic for the Water.
Concertos for different Inſtruments.
Sonatas for two Violins and a Baſs.
Harpſichord-Leſſons.
Twelve grand Concertos.
Twelve ditto for the Organ.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

WORKS

OF

George Frederic Handel.

BRITISH MUSEUM

BEFORE we enter on the examination of HANDEL's works, it is neceſſary to ſettle the meaning of ſome words, which, on other ſubjects have been uſed with no great care, but never perhaps with ſo little as when they have been applied to Muſic. It is of conſequence to underſtand them well: for, whether we would explain the grounds, or diſtinguiſh the kinds, or eſtimate the degrees of muſical excellence, recourſe muſt ſtill be had to theſe expreſſions. A clear notion of the ſubject to which they are applied, will direct us to their true meaning.

Muſic

Muſic is founded on eſtabliſhed rules and principles. There are certain relations and proportions which ſubſiſt between ſounds, and certain effects, which are conſtantly and regularly † produced by their different union, arrangement, and combination. The rules are derived from experience and obſervation, which inform us what particular ſyſtem or diſpoſition of ſounds will produce the moſt pleaſing effects. A clear comprehenſion of thoſe rules, and the ability to apply them, are called *knowledge*: and

† It is almoſt needleſs to make exceptions with regard to thoſe who diſlike Muſic, or who never attend to its effects. For (as the Abbé Du Bos ſays) Il eſt des hommes tellement inſenſibles à la Muſique, & dont l'oreille (pour me ſervir de cette expreſſion) eſt tellement eloignée du cœur, que les chants les plus naturels ne les touchent pas.

and this alone, without any great ſhare either of *invention* or *taſte*, may make a tolerable Compoſer. But either of theſe joined with it, forms a maſter.

The maſters may be diſtinguiſhed into two claſſes, as their principal merit conſiſts in *invention* or *taſte*. The former of theſe ſeems to conſiſt in the quick inveſtigation of new, or hitherto-unperceived relations; in the combining theſe relations after an unuſual manner, or according to a different order; and in the happy application of them to particular ſubjects, eſpecially to ſuch as are of an important or intereſting nature.

Thoſe who have an *inventive* genius will depart from the common rules, and pleaſe us the more

by ſuch deviations. Theſe muſt of courſe be conſidered as bold ſtrokes, or daring flights of fancy. Such paſſages are not founded on rules, but are themſelves the foundation of new rules.

On the other hand, they who have *taſte*, or a nice diſcernment of the minuter circumſtances that pleaſe, will poliſh and improve the inventions of others. Theſe will adhere ſtrictly to rules, and even make them more ſtrict.

Hence we may diſcern the reaſon why great *invention* and perfect *taſte* are ſeldom, or never united, altho' either the one or the other may *meet* with *knowledge*.

Hence too we may conclude, that the merit of HANDEL's Muſic will

will be leaſt diſcerned by the lovers of elegance and correctneſs. They are ſhocked with every defect of this ſort, while their very character hinders them from entering into thoſe excellencies of a higher nature, in which he ſo much ſurpaſſes all other Muſicians: excellencies, which are hardly conſiſtent with a conſtant regard to thoſe minuter circumſtances, on which beauty depends. As *taſte* implies a natural ſenſibility, and an habitual attention to theſe very circumſtances, all neglects of them fall under its juriſdiction. But as this faculty is of a tender and timid nature, it is apt to conſider thoſe bolder ſtrokes and rougher daſhes which genius delights in, either as coarſe, or as extravagant. However, when it attempts to chaſtiſe or correct ſuch paſſages, it

miſtakes its province. Art is *here* not only uſeleſs, but dangerous. It may eaſily deſtroy originality, tho' it cannot create elegance; which if it *could* be had, would be ill purchaſed at the expence of the other. For the generality of mankind have not enough of delicacy to be much affected with minute inſtances of beauty; but yet are ſo formed, as to be tranſported with every the leaſt mark of grandeur and ſublimity.

What gives me the fuller aſſurance in the truth of theſe principles, is their agreement with the following obſervations, which a Gentleman, who is a perfect maſter of the ſubject, was ſo good as to communicate to me. The obſervations are as follows:

" As party and prejudice have been carried pretty high, on the one ſide in favour of HANDEL, and on the other in favour of the Italians, I ſhall endeavour to conſider this affair with the impartiality it requires, and ſettle, to the beſt of my judgment, the merits on both ſides.

The taſte in Muſic both of the Germans and the Italians, is ſuited to the different characters of the two nations. That of the firſt is rough and martial; and their Muſic conſiſts of ſtrong effects produced, without much delicacy, by the rattle of a number of inſtruments. The Italians, from their ſtrong and lively feelings, have endeavoured in their Muſic to expreſs all the agitations of the ſoul, from the moſt

delicate ſenſations of love, to the moſt violent effects of hatred and deſpair; and this in a great degree by the modulation of a ſingle part.

HANDEL formed his taſte upon that of his countrymen, but by the greatneſs and ſublimity of his genius, he has worked up ſuch effects as are aſtoniſhing. Some of the beſt Italian maſters, by the delicacy of their modulation, have ſo deeply entered into all the different ſenſations of the human heart, that they may almoſt be ſaid to have the paſſions of mankind at their command; at leaſt of that part of mankind, whoſe lively feelings are ſomewhat raiſed to a pitch with their own.

When we conſider two kinds of Muſic ſo very different in character,

ter, as that of HANDEL, and that of the beſt Italians, and both carried to ſo great a degree of perfection, we cannot be ſurpriſed at ſeeing ſuch warm advocates for each. HANDEL's Muſic muſt be allowed to have had ſome advantages over theirs, independent of its real merit. The fulneſs, ſtrength, and ſpirit of his Muſic, is wonderfully well ſuited to the common ſenſations of mankind, which muſt be rouſed a little † roughly, and are not of a caſt to be eaſily worked

† It is only HANDEL's *general* character that is here oppoſed to that of the Italians. For though the caſt of his mind was *more* towards the great and ſublime than any *other* ſtyle, yet he ſometimes excels the Italians themſelves even in the paſſionate and pathetic. This appears from particular inſtances, which we ſhall have occaſion to cite preſently; and from others which might be cited. That theſe have been overlooked, is probably owing to the many inſtances of a contrary kind in his Oratories and elſewhere.

upon by delicacies. Thus he takes in all the unprejudiced part of mankind. For in his ſublime ſtrokes, of which he has many, he acts as powerfully upon the moſt Knowing, as upon the Ignorant. Another advantage which he has over the Italians, is owing to themſelves. The quantity of bad Muſic we have had from Italy, prejudices many againſt the good. And here it may not be amiſs to ſay ſomething of the preſent ſtate of the Italian Muſic.

The old Muſic, ſuch as it was in the time of PALESTRINO, and thoſe excellent Compoſers in the Church ſtyle, was performed by a number of voices: the harmony was full and varied; and the effects were produced by the able management of their fugues and imita-

imitations through all the parts. This required great ſkill in Muſic, as well as genius: ſo that at that time no man could ſet up for a Compoſer, without a very profound knowledge of the rules of compoſition. It happened, as it naturally muſt when the ſtudy of Muſic engages men of great abilities, both as to genius and knowledge, that improvements were conſtantly ariſing from one quarter or another. By this means the art of modulating a ſingle voice, ſo as to expreſs the various paſſions and affections, was every day gaining ground, till VINCI and PERGOLESI carried it in ſome of their Songs to the higheſt pitch we can as yet have any idea of. With this exquiſite expreſſion in the voice, they have ſhewn equal ſkill in the management of the inſtruments that accompany it. For their

inſtrumental parts are ſo judiciouſly contrived, that they are conſtantly adding new beauties to the Song-part without ever overwhelming it.

I cannot but lament that the Song-muſic which we have from Italy, has been dwindling ever ſince their time. And from the preſent ſituation of things, I think there is but little reaſon to hope that it will riſe again. The Italian Compoſers have two things ſtrongly againſt them, and which I conceive to be the cauſe of all the trifling, frothy Muſic we have at this time. The one is, the little time they have for compoſing. For as ſoon as any riſing genius has given ſome ſtriking proof of his abilities, the Managers of almoſt every Opera in Italy, want to engage him to compoſe for them.

The

The young fellow thinks his reputation is eſtabliſhed, and endeavours to make the moſt of it, by undertaking to compoſe as much as it is poſſible to do in the time. This obliges him to write down any thing that firſt preſents itſelf: and thus his Opera is chiefly made up of old worn-out paſſages haſtily put together, without any new turn of expreſſion, or harmony. Almoſt every Compoſer of genius in Italy, is an inſtance of this. But the moſt ſtriking inſtance I know is JOMELLI, who has in ſome things ſhewn himſelf to be equal to any Compoſer that has gone before him, while in many others he does not appear even above the common rank. The other difficulty the Italian Opera-compoſers have to ſtruggle with, is the undue influence of the Singers over them. A

good

good Singer (which is equally applicable to both the ſexes) ſeldom fails to make ſuch a party in his favour, as it would not be prudent in the Compoſer to diſoblige. This in ſome degree puts him under the Singer's direction in relation to his own Songs; which is in fact the being directed in his compoſitions by a perſon that knows very little of Muſic, and that wants to ſhine by playing all the tricks he has been able either to invent or to learn.

This being the preſent ſituation of the Italian Compoſers, it is not ſurpriſing that their compoſitions ſhould be ſo thin and flimſy. For it is hardly to be expected, that a Compoſer will be at the pains to do all he can, when the low price he is to have for his Opera, will hardly find him bread, if he has ſpent much

much time upon it; and when he may riſque both bread and reputation by diſpleaſing a favourite Singer.

From all that has been ſaid, I would conclude, that both thoſe who indiſcriminately condemn HANDEL's compoſitions, and thoſe who in like manner condemn the Italian Muſic, are equally to blame as prejudiced or ignorant deciders. And I would recommend it to all true lovers of Muſic, to examine with candor, and I may even add, with ſome degree of reverence, the compoſitions of men, whoſe great abilities in their profeſſion do honour to human nature. I think it is highly probable, that whatever delicacies appear in HANDEL's Muſic, are owing to his journey into Italy; and likewiſe that the Italians

lians are much indebted to him for their management of the inſtrumental parts that accompany the voice; in which indeed ſome few of them have ſucceeded admirably well. And as ſome proof of HANDEL's influence in Italy, it is, I believe, an undoubted fact, that French-horns were never uſed there as an accompaniment to the voice, till HANDEL introduced them.

But however well ſome of the Italians may have ſucceeded in the management of the inſtrumental parts in their Song-muſic, there is one point in which HANDEL ſtands alone, and in which he may poſſibly never be equalled; I mean in the inſtrumental parts of his Choruſſes, and full Church-muſic. In theſe he has given innumerable inſtances of an unbounded genius.

In

In ſhort, there is ſuch a ſublimity in many of the effects he has work'd up by the combination of inſtruments and voices, that they ſeem to be rather the effect of inſpiraration, than of knowledge in Muſic."

But in order to make a right judgment of his abilities in Muſic, attention muſt conſtantly be had to its two different ſpecies, *viz.* the inſtrumental and vocal.

The excellence of the former conſiſts in the ſtrength and fulneſs of its † harmony: that of the latter

† This is to be underſtood with ſome limitation. For it is not meant that the excellence of Inſtrumental Muſic conſiſts *altogether* in the ſtrength and fulneſs of its harmony; but only that this is the perfection of it as contradiſtinguiſhed from the Vocal. The Concertos of TARTINI,

latter in the delicacy and propriety of its melody.

Now that fulneſs of harmony, which is eſſential to the one, may in ſome caſes hurt, if it doth not deſtroy, the perfection of the other. ROUSSEAU has developed this matter wonderfully well in his *Lettre ſur la Muſique Françoiſe.* And it is in this point that I think HANDEL is ſometimes faulty, and the beſt Italian maſters almoſt conſtantly right, although I do not carry my idea

TARTINI, and of ſome other firſt-rate Compoſers for inſtruments, are ſtrong proofs that the excellence of Inſtrumental Muſic ſhould not be confined to harmony alone. For the merit of thoſe pieces conſiſts ſtill more in the high and uncommon delicacy of the melody, than in the harmony, though excellent in its kind, and incomparably well contrived for the ſetting off and ſtrengthening the expreſſion of the principal part.

idea of their perfection quite ſo far as ROUSSEAU does.

As Operas and Oratorios plainly belong to the vocal claſs, the Recitative and Air muſt always be conſidered as the principal parts in ſuch performances. Yet in ſome of HANDEL's, the Symphonies and Accompaniments, inſtead of ſhewing thoſe parts to advantage, have abſorbed them, as it were, in their own ſuperior ſplendor. His uncommon ſtrength in the inſtrumental way, which it was natural for him to be fond of diſplaying, may have been one reaſon for his falling into this fault. Another perhaps was the badneſs of ſome of his Singers; for there never was an Opera in which all of them were good. A judicious Compoſer will always take care that the worſt

ſhall have little to do. But unleſs the inſtruments by their predominant harmony, fill up the vacuities occaſioned by the abſence, or thinneſs of the vocal parts, the attention of the audience muſt neceſſarily languiſh: an inconvenience evidently greater than that of violating the rules of propriety, by giving to the inſtruments more ſtreſs than the ſubject will warrant.

It may alſo be added, that in ſo long a performance as that of an Opera, there muſt be many Airs in different ſtyles, and on different ſubjects. The fineſt modulations, continued too long, or repeated too often, would flatten upon the ear. Here again recourſe muſt be had to the inſtruments, which, by a little over-acting their part, gain attention to thoſe Songs of a lower claſs, which

which ſerve to ſet off and recommend the others. So that we muſt not wonder, if in HANDEL's old Operas we meet with ſome * Songs, which, from the fulneſs of the parts, appear to be almoſt Concertos.

But how ſhall we excuſe for thoſe inſtances of coarſeneſs and indelicacy which occur ſo frequently in the Airs of his Oratorios? For as the melody is a fundamental and eſſential part in vocal Muſic, it ſhould ſeem that nothing can attone for the neglect of it. The beſt Painter would be blamed,

* Yet in many others all the parts are ſo nicely adjuſted, and ſo well ſuſtained, that the ſeveral inſtruments in his Orcheſtra, reſemble the ſeveral perſonages in a fine piece of hiſtory-painting, all engaged and intereſted in the ſame ſubject, and all concurring, in their different ſituations, to the furtherance and execution of the principal deſign.

ſhould he draw off the attention too much from the principal figure in his piece, however perfect, by the very high and exquiſite finiſhing of ſome inferior object: but much more would he deſerve to be blamed, if he left that figure the leaſt finiſhed, which all the rules of his art required to be the moſt ſo. Now in Muſic, though there may ſometimes be occaſion, as we have ſeen, for giving the inſtruments the aſcendancy over the voices; yet never ſhould the Song-parts be unmeaning or inexpreſſive, much leſs coarſe or ordinary.

To ſpeak the plain truth, HANDEL was not ſo excellent in Air, where there is no ſtrong character to mark, or paſſion to expreſs. He had not the art, for which the Italians have ever been remarkable, the

the art of trifling with grace and delicacy. His turn was for greater things, in expreſſing which it is hard to ſay, whether he excelled moſt in his Air, or in his Harmony. This may be proved even from his Oratorios, where he has failed the moſt * and the oftener. But in his old Operas there are numberleſs inſtances of his abilities in the vocal way, ſuch as it would be difficult to parallel out of the greateſt Maſters, whoſe whole excellence lay in that particular ſpecies. I will

* Some allowances muſt be made for the diſadvantages he was under from the Audience, the Singers, and the Language, all of them changed for the worſe.

A gentleman whom he had deſired to look over JUDAS MACCHABÆUS, having declared his opinion of it; Well, (ſaid HANDEL) to be ſure you have picked out the beſt Songs, but you take no notice of that which is to get me all the money; meaning the worſt in the whole Oratorio.

only refer the Reader to a few Songs in different ſtyles, *viz.*

Un diſprezzato affetto, } in OTTONE.
&
* Affanni del penſier, }

Ombra cara, in RADAMISTO.

Men fedele, }
& } in ALESSANDRO.
Il mio cor, }

Here too he will ſee, that tho', in two of the Songs above-cited, there is great employment for the inſtruments; and though in all of them the parts which they have to execute, are exceedingly fine; yet they are ſo contrived, as not to eclipſe

* An eminent Maſter, who was not on good terms with HANDEL, often declared the opinion he had of his abilities in very ſtrong expreſſions. That great Bear (ſaid he) was certainly inſpired when he made this Song. He might have ſaid the ſame with full as much juſtice of that which I have coupled with it.

eclipſe the air or melody. At the ſame time that they relieve the ear by the beauty and variety of their accords, they † aſſiſt the voice in expreſſing the particular action,

† After all, the vocal ſpecies is not more indebted to the inſtrumental, than this is to the other. Many inſtances might be produced to confirm this aſſertion, from the compoſitions of different Maſters. But TARTINI's Muſic may almoſt be conſidered as one continued inſtance of it. All his melody is ſo truly vocal in its ſtyle and character, that thoſe parts of it which do not exceed the compaſs and powers of a voice, one would almoſt imagine were intended to be ſung. His moſt difficult paſſages bear the ſame character, which was very apparent, when they were executed by himſelf: and all the Italians were ſo ſtrongly ſenſible of this, that in ſpeaking of his manner of playing, they often made uſe of the following expreſſion, *non ſuona, canta ſu'l violino.* The reaſon why the compoſitions of this great Maſter are admired by ſo few people in Egland, is that the Performers of them neither enter into the true character of the Muſic, nor play it according to the intention of its author. The more any

piece

paſſion, or ſentiment intended to be repreſented.

And here I may juſt take notice, that the proper place for moſt muſical imitations, is in the Symphonies and Accompaniments. There are indeed ſome few ſounds, which Nature herſelf employs to expreſs the ſtronger emotions of the human heart, which the voice may imitate. But it is common for the Maſters not only to forget the nature and * extent of this imitative power in

piece of Muſic is delicate and expreſſive, the more inſipid and diſagreeable muſt it appear under a coarſe and unmeaning execution. Juſt as the moſt delicate ſtrokes of humour in comedy, and the moſt affecting turns of paſſion in tragedy, will ſuffer infinitely more from being improperly read, than a common paragraph in a news-paper.

* See Mr. HARRIS's three treatiſes, in which this point is diſcuſſed with great judgment and accuracy.

in Muſic, but alſo to miſtake the ſubject on which to employ it. A too cloſe attachmment to ſome particular words in a ſentence, hath often miſled them from the general meaning of it. HANDEL himſelf, from his imperfect acquaintance with the Engliſh language, has ſometimes fallen into theſe miſtakes. A Compoſer ought never to pay this attention to ſingle words, excepting they have an uncommon energy, and contain ſome paſſion or ſentiment. To do HANDEL juſtice, he is generally great and maſterly, where the language and poetry are well adapted to his purpoſe. The Engliſh tongue abounds with monoſyllables and conſonants. Tho' theſe cannot always be avoided, yet the writers of muſical dramas ſhould always pick out ſuch as are the leaſt harſh and diſagree-

able

able to the ear. The ſame regard muſt be had to the ſentiments, as to the language. The more ſimple and natural they are, the more eaſily will Muſic expreſs them. There was a time (ſays Mr. Addiſon) when it was laid down as a maxim, that nothing was capable of being well ſet to Muſic, that was not nonſenſe. This ſatyr is equally juſt and beautiful. But tho' the ſenſe of ſuch productions cannot be too ſtrong, the poetry of them may be too fine. If it abounds with noble images, and high wrought deſcriptions, and contains little of character, ſentiment, or paſſion, the beſt Compoſer will have no opportunity of exerting his talents. Where there is nothing capable of being expreſſed, all he can do is to entertain his audience with mere ornamental

paſſages

paſſages of his own invention. But graces and flouriſhes muſt riſe from the ſubject of the compoſition in which they are employed, juſt as flowers and feſtoons from the deſign of the building. It is from their relation to the whole, that theſe minuter parts derive their value.

To return to our examination of HANDEL's works. In his Choruſſes he is without a rival. That eaſy, natural melody, and fine flowing air, which runs through them, is almoſt as wonderful a peculiarity, as that perfect fulneſs and variety, amid which there ſeems however to be no part but what figures, and no note that could be ſpared.

HIS Anthems are choral throughout, and ſo excellent in their kind, that

that it would be difficult to conceive any thing of human production that is more ſo. Thoſe which he made for the Duke of Chandois's chapel are the leaſt known, but far from being among the leaſt excellent. It is true that in the admirable epiſtle addreſſed to Lord Burlington, the two following lines, viz.

" Light quirks of muſic, broken and uneven,
Make the ſoul dance upon a jig to heaven;"

which are meant to expoſe the falſe taſte of ſuch Muſic, as is either foreign to the ſubject, or improper for the occaſion, may appear to be levelled at HANDEL, as he was employed in compoſing for the chapel of the nobleman, whoſe miſtaken notions of magnificence were ſuppoſed to be pointed at by more circumſtances than one in the lines

lines immediately preceding thoſe I have quoted. But there are many reaſons, which make it utterly improbable that any Muſic of HANDEL's is here intended. For though Mr. POPE was no judge himſelf of any productions on this ſubject, yet he had many friends who well underſtood them; and none indeed better than the very lord, to whom his epiſtle is addreſſed. Beſides, the opinion which he actually entertained of HANDEL's abilities, may be gathered from thoſe fine lines upon him, which are quoted, in his life, from the 4th book of the DUNCIAD. It is however no way improbable that the ſame chapel might have furniſhed inſtances of the egregious impropriety here ridiculed, after HANDEL ceaſed to compoſe for it. But whether it did or not, it was the Poet's buſi-

neſs

neſs to go through the ſeveral inſtances of a perverted taſte, in which the ſcene he made choice of abounded perhaps more than any other.

The reader will excuſe this digreſſion, as it ſeemed neceſſary to guard againſt miſtakes not leſs injurious to the judgment of POPE on the one hand, than to the honour of HANDEL on the other.

As his Oratorios are all, or moſt of them, on ſcripture-ſubjects, ſo the Choruſſes in them are quite in the church-ſtyle; and it may be ſaid without extravagance, that the ſublime ſtrokes they abound with, look more like the effects of illumination, than of mere natural genius. Out of a multitude of examples which might be produced,

I will

I will only remind the reader of the few following in the ſingle Oratorio of MESSIAH, *viz.*

For unto us a child is born, *&c.*
Lift up your heads, O ye gates, *&c.*
Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, *&c.*

After theſe vaſt efforts of genius, we find him riſing ſtill higher in the three * concluding Choruſſes, each of which ſurpaſſes the preceding, till in the winding up of the Amen, the ear is fill'd with ſuch a glow of harmony, as leaves the mind in a kind of heavenly extaſy.

There are indeed but few perſons ſufficiently verſed in Muſic, to

* Beginning with, "Worthy is the lamb that was ſlain."

to perceive either the particular propriety and juſtneſs, or the general union and conſent, of all the parts in theſe complicated pieces. However, it is very remarkable that ſome perſons, on whom the fineſt modulations would have little or no effect, have been greatly ſtruck with HANDEL's Choruſſes. This is probably owing to that grandeur of conception, which predominates in them; and which, as coming purely from Nature, is the more ſtrongly, and the more generally felt.

It is true, that, in the wonderful perfomance above-mentioned, there are great inequalities, as in moſt of HANDEL's: but whoever ſhould examine it throughout, muſt conſider him as a down-right prodigy. I uſe this expreſſion becauſe there

there are no words capable of conveying an idea of his character, unleſs indeed I was to repeat thoſe which LONGINUS has employed in his deſcription of DEMOSTHENES, every part of which is ſo perfectly applicable to HANDEL, that one would almoſt be perſuaded it was intended for him †.

His excellence in another branch of vocal Muſic, *viz.* the Recitative, might eaſily be ſhewn either from his old Operas, or from the ſingle Oratorio above-mentioned. For a ſpecimen, the following paſſages will be ſufficient:

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, ſaith your God, MESSIAH.

Alma

† See the concluſion of LONGINUS's 33d Section.

Alma del gran POMPEO,
JULIO CÆSARE.

To which we may add, that grand ſcene of the death of BAJAZET in Tamerlane.

Without attempting to explain the cauſes of that forcible expreſſion, and overpowering pathos, which breathe in theſe, and many other paſſages of his Recitative, I will only alledge theſe effects of Muſic, to ſhew that its true uſe, and greateſt value, is to heighten the natural impreſſions of religion and humanity.

The Duettos and Terzettos were made at different times. Thoſe which he made abroad having never been printed, are in very few hands, and but little known. As they are

of

of a character ſomewhat different from his latter compoſitions of the ſame kind, and in ſome reſpects ſuperior to them, they deſerve particular notice. They were compoſed in the vigour of his faculties, not for the theatre, but for the cloſet. Nothing was to be ſacrificed to the rude, undiſcerning ear of the multitude; nor were invention and harmony to be given up for the poor purchaſe of an *encore*. The author had only himſelf to pleaſe, or ſcholars formed by himſelf: and let any one judge whether his compoſition was not likely to be the better for ſuch circumſtances. Indeed, as might well be expected, we find theſe admirable productions free from ſuch marks of haſte and negligence, as are ſeen, and ſhould in all reaſon be excuſed, in the works

of length, which he has ſince compoſed. When we complain of theſe productions as frequently defective with regard to taſte and delicacy, we ſhould do well to recollect how little of either belongs to that tribunal, before which their merits were to be decided. But to reſume our examination of the Duettos. It is as hard to characterize theſe, as the other parts of HANDEL's works. Though they may be ſaid to comprehend moſt ſtyles, yet the manly and the nervous prevail upon the whole. Indeed, in ſome of them there is a ſweetneſs and delicacy of modulation not inferior to that of the amiable STEFFANI; as in many there is a ſpirit and majeſty to which he appears to have been a ſtranger.

It was not to be diſſembled that the manly caſt of HANDEL's mind often led him into a kind of melody ill ſuited to the voice; that he was apt to depart from the ſtyle which the ſpecies of compoſition demanded, and run into paſſages purely inſtrumental. Yet ſo admirable is the contrivance, and ſo beautiful the modulation in ſome of theſe pieces, where this deviation is moſt conſpicuous; that the beſt judge of Muſic, who examines them as a critic, will hardly have the heart to execute his office; and, while the laws of it compel him to arraign the fault, will almoſt be ſorry to ſee it corrected. That all this may not appear to be ſaid at random, let us enter a little into the particulars.

The Duetto beginning, "*Am-*
"*mirarvi io ſono intento,*" is a

beautiful example of a ſtyle truly vocal, and much reſembling that of STEFFANI.

That beginning, "*Conſervate*," is another inſtance of the ſame kind. The firſt movement of "*Sono liete*," is another; but the laſt movement of the ſame is inſtrumental. Of this we have, in a manner, the author's acknowledgment; for he introduced it afterwards, with ſome alteration, into the Overture of JUDAS MACCHABÆUS.

As examples of a ſpirited and beautiful manner unknown to the calm and eaſy STEFFANI, I ſhall only mention, among many others, "*Che vai penſando*," and "*Tacete*."

Among the Trios "*Quando non ho più core*," is an inſtance of the inſtru-

inſtrumental ſtyle, carried ſo far, as to render the performance of it extremely difficult.

In ſome parts of theſe pieces, but more particularly in the Terzettos, it is curious to obſerve thoſe vaſt conceptions of the choral kind, pent up within the narrow limits of two or three parts; and ſtruggling as it were, for that enlargement, which has ſince permitted them to take their full ſweep in the wide, and almoſt unbounded province of *Chorus*. To ſhew that this obſervation is not chimerical, it need only be recollected that one of the fineſt Choruſſes in the ALLEGRO, and that very artificial one with which ALEXANDER'S FEAST concludes, were made out of two of theſe Trios.

Though the Duettos and Trios in his Operas and Oratorios are not

in general ſo chaſte, or of ſo learned a caſt, as thoſe of which we have juſt been ſpeaking, yet the muſical reader will eaſily call to mind ſeveral of diſtinguiſhed beauty. Such are the famous Trio in ACIS and GALATEA;— the Duetto, "*O death, where is thy ſting*," in MESSIAH; — "*From this dread ſcene*," in JUDAS MACCHABÆUS;— and "*Io t'abbraccio*," in RODELINDA.

The only Serenata (properly ſo called) which he made here, was ACIS and GALATEA; and it is one of the moſt equal and perfect of all his compoſitions. From this we may gueſs at the merits of thoſe which are not extant. The Cantatas now remaining have been hitherto little examined. That of TARQUIN and LUCRETIA was made at Rome, and its merits are much

better known in Italy than in England.

We have now run through his ſeveral productions in the vocal ſpecies; and from this curſory examination I think it muſt appear, that even where he is leaſt excellent on the whole, he has given ſuch frequent, and ſuch ſtrong proofs of his abilities, as place him on a level with the greateſt Maſters, whoſe whole ſtrength lay in that particular ſpecies.

In his Muſic for inſtruments there are the ſame marks of a great genius, and likewiſe ſome inſtances of great negligence. He often attended more to the effect of the whole, than to that artificial contexture of the parts, for which GEMINIANI is ſo juſtly admired.

In his Fugues and Overtures he is quite original. The Style of them is peculiar to himſelf, and no way like that of any Maſter before him. In the formation of theſe pieces, knowledge and invention ſeem to have contended for the maſtery.

Tho' no man ever introduced ſuch a number of inſtruments, yet in his Orcheſtra not one is found idle or inſignificant. On the contrary, each hath ſuch a figure and character belonging to it, as ſeems to render it not only proper and uſeful, but neceſſary and eſſential to the performance. Even thoſe which are of the loweſt order, and leaſt value, when conſidered in themſelves, from the artful and judicious manner in which they are introduced and employed, riſe

into a kind of dignity and importance, of which by nature they ſhould ſeem incapable.

Of his talents in compoſing for a ſingle inſtrument, we need no better proofs than are given us in his Harpſichord-leſſons. The firſt ſett, which were printed by his own order, will always be held in the higheſt eſteem, notwithſtanding thoſe real improvements in the ſtyle for leſſons which ſome Maſters have ſince hit upon. HANDEL's have one diſadvantage, owing entirely to their peculiar excellence. The ſurpriſing fulneſs and activity of the inner parts, increaſes the difficulty of playing them to ſo great a degree, that few perſons are capable of doing them juſtice. Indeed there appears to be more work in them than any one inſtrument ſhould ſeem capable of diſpatching.

To

To conclude, there is in theſe and other parts of his works, ſuch a fulneſs, force, and energy, that the harmony of HANDEL may always be compared to the antique figure of HERCULES, which ſeems to be nothing but muſcles and ſinews; as his melody may often be likened to the VENUS of MEDICIS, which is all grace and delicacy.

Whatever ſhall be thought of this attempt to do juſtice to his memory, too much reaſon there is for believing that the intereſts of religion and humanity are not ſo ſtrongly guarded, or ſo firmly ſecured, as eaſily to ſpare thoſe ſuccours, or forego thoſe aſſiſtances which are miniſtered to them from the elegant arts.

They

They refine and exalt our ideas of pleaſure, which when rightly underſtood, and properly purſued, is the very end of our exiſtence. They improve and ſettle our ideas of taſte; which, when founded on ſolid and conſiſtent principles, explains the cauſes, and heightens the effects, of whatever is beautiful or excellent, whether in the works of creation, or in the productions of human ſkill.

They adorn and embelliſh the face of Nature; the talents of men they ſharpen and invigorate; the manners they civilize and poliſh; in a word, they ſoften the cares of life, and render its heavieſt calamities much more ſupportable by adding to the number of its innocent enjoyments.

The

The hopes of rendering ſome ſervice to Muſic, and of ſuggeſting ſome hints which may poſſibly give riſe to farther enquiries into this difficult ſcience, have induced me to ſubjoin to the foregoing liſt of HANDEL's works, ſuch obſervations upon them, as ſeemed to offer themſelves in the courſe of this review. For if the obſervations are juſt, thoſe who are maſters of the ſubject may be tempted to improve and extend them; and if they are erroneous, the ſame perſons are at liberty to refute them.

At all events, ſuch a view of the various and valuable improvements derived to Muſic from the inceſſant labours, and wonderful endowments of one * man, may ſerve to awaken the

* There are but a few perſons, who have carefully looked over, and are thoroughly acquainted with *all* the works of HANDEL, and they

the attention of the Curious to thoſe new ſources of beauty and ſublimity which may yet lie concealed in the regions of harmony. It may alſo ſerve to put future Artiſts on a more careful ſtudy of his compoſitions in every kind, and ſo check the progreſs of thoſe corruptions in taſte, which in every period have threatned deſtruction to the Art, and in none perhaps more than in the * preſent.

Little

they only can be proper judges of his abilities. Yet a ſingle glimpſe of the Catalogue may enable us to gueſs at the aſtoniſhing extent of his genius: for he has not only ranged through the whole compaſs of his Art, but has given unqueſtionable proofs of his excellence in all the branches of it.

* Our moſt faſhionable Muſic of late years carries hardly any appearance of knowledge or invention, hardly indeed any traces of taſte or judgment. Light and trivial Airs, upheld by a thin and ſhadowy Harmony; an almoſt perpetual uniformity of ſtyle, and ſameneſs of ſubject; an endleſs repetition of the ſame move-

Little indeed are the hopes of ever equalling, much leſs of excelling ſo vaſt a Proficient in his own way: however, as there are ſo many avenues to excellence ſtill open, ſo many paths to glory ſtill untrod, it is hoped that the example of this illuſtrious Foreigner will rather prove an incentive, than a diſcouragement to the induſtry and genius of our own countrymen.

movements and paſſages, tho' worn to rags; the barren and beggarly expedient of Paſticcios ſo often practiſed;—ſuch a decay as this in the ſtate of Muſic, (I forbear to make thoſe exceptions which the Judges of the Art will make for themſelves) ſhould excite ſome veneration for the works of HANDEL.

FINIS.

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